

The American Mercury

THE CASE FOR DEFICIT SPENDING James Roosevelt
THE CASE AGAINST DEFICIT SPENDING John T. Flynn
THE BLACK MARKET IN RUSSIA David J. Dallin
DANCE AROUND THE BLOCK (A Play) William Saroyan

CARLOS ROMULO

President of the UN Assembly

by Serge Fliegers

Page 685



Ever thought of owning a radio station?

WCFM invites you to become an owner

WCFM, after one year on the air, has become the Washington anchor of a growing network of liberal-labor-cooperative stations from New York to Los Angeles . . .

WCFM is dedicated to public service and serves as a much needed channel of democratic expression in the Nation's Capital . . .

WCFM has some of the nation's outstanding commentators—Marquis Childs, Robert Nathan, B. S. Bercovici, Will Allen, Mrs. Raymond Clapper, John Herling and others whose programs are a healthy antidote to some of the irresponsible talk heard on other networks . . .

WCFM is cooperatively owned by thousands of Americans all over the country . . .

BUY YOUR SHARES IN YOUR COOPERATIVE FM STATION NOW!

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Chairman

Sen. Frank P. Graham
Rep. Adolph Sabath
John Dewey
James T. Farrell

Mordecai Johnson
Charles LaFollette
Clara S. Littledale
Philip Murray

James Patton
Walter P. Reuther
Michael Straight
Jerry Voorhis

Preferred shares are available to the public from an offering of 13,355 shares at par value of \$10 each. 491 common shares at par value of \$100 each are available only to consumer cooperatives. Underwriting discounts or commissions will not be incurred. Estimated distribution cost is \$1.35 per share of preferred stock and 18c for common stock; aggregate expense of \$20,788.63. Net proceeds will be used for the completion and development of WCFM and for operating capital. According to original plans it was anticipated that the station would operate at a loss for the first two years on the air. Total net loss, including depreciation, up to August 31, 1949, has been \$66,682.05. We are rapidly closing the gap between income and expenditures. Net income for September, 1949 will exceed \$2,500 against cash operating expenses of about \$5,000.

SUBSCRIBE NOW—Send Check With This Coupon

WCFM—The Cooperative Broadcasting Assoc.

1120 Connecticut Ave., Wash., D. C.

☐ I subscribe to _____ shares (\$10.00 ea.)

of WCFM preferred stock, total \$_____

☐ Please send further information.

Name _____

Address _____

Signature _____

These securities are believed to be exempt from registration with the Securities Exchange Commission. Exemption, if available, does not indicate approval or disapproval by the Commission or that the Commission has considered accuracy or completeness of statements included herein.

WCFM

The people's station in the nation's capital

The year that got away—

Date Due

American mercury
December, 1949

DOES NOT CIRCULATE UNTIL

January 2, 1949

JAN 12 1949

year, the
ment.

hat date,
weekday

vay from
ey don't
em save

re mak-
y invest-
s Bonds.

of insur-
s to two

Plan, at
mployed.
often as

join the
ur bank.

her mo-
day.

aving—

maga-
n with
hers of
service.

Form 34-L-16—100M 10-47

The American Mercury

with which is combined the magazine, COMMON SENSE

VOLUME LXIX

DECEMBER 1949

NUMBER 312

The Case for Deficit Spending	James Roosevelt	647
The Case Against Deficit Spending	John T. Flynn	656
Once Around the Block, <i>A Play</i>	William Saroyan	663
"The Thoughts of Youth . . ." <i>A Poem</i>	Marion Doyle	675
The Black Market in Russia	David J. Dallin	676
The High Hill, <i>A Poem</i>	Kaye Starbird	684
Carlos Romulo	Serge Fliegers	685
THE SKEPTICS' CORNER	Bergen Evans	694
Mentally Retarded Children	H. A. Rusk, M.D. & Eugene J. Taylor	698
<i>Phrase Origins</i> — 56	Morris Rosenblum	703
THE THEATRE: Clinical Notes	George Jean Nathan	706
Pioneer, <i>A Poem</i>	May Williams Ward	710
Hector McNeil Meets the Press		711
The Summer of the Insistent Voices, <i>A Story</i>	John Bell Clayton	716
Portrait of an Ex-Lifer	Anonymous	727
DOWN TO EARTH: The Biology of Freedom	Alan Devoe	737
To a Student, <i>A Poem</i>	Joseph Joel Keith	741
Our Growing Self-Sufficiency	C. Lester Walker	742
THE LIBRARY: The Intellectuals Discover America	Charles Angoff	748
Southern Pacific: <i>Golden Trumpet, A Poem</i>	G. E. Hunter	754
THE CHECK LIST		755
THE OPEN FORUM		759
INDEX TO VOLUME LXIX		764
COVER (<i>Carlos Romulo</i>) by Al Hirschfeld		
DEPARTMENTAL DRAWINGS by Hans Moller		

Published monthly by The American Mercury, Inc., at 35 cents a copy. Annual subscription \$4.00 in U. S. and possessions, Canada and in the countries of the Pan American Union; \$5.00 in all other countries. Publication office, Concord, N. H. Editorial and General offices, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y. Printed in the U. S. A. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Concord, N. H., September 29, 1936, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1949 by The American Mercury, Inc. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved. Protection secured under the International Copyright Convention and the Pan American Copyright Convention. No articles may be reprinted in whole or part without permission.

Lawrence E. Spivak, Editor & Publisher

Charles Angoff, Managing Editor

Daniel Seligman, Assistant Editor; Martha Rountree, Roving Editor

George Salter, Art Director; Joseph W. Ferman, General Manager

The American Mercury

in forthcoming issues will discuss:

What is *Osteopathy*?

What is *Chiropractic*?

What is *Christian Science*?

Millions of people all over the country avail themselves of the services of osteopaths, chiropractors, and Christian Science practitioners. When healing arts have achieved such wide acceptance, it is the duty of wide-awake periodicals to discuss them openly and fairly. To ignore them is to be unworthy of the tradition of vital American journalism.

THE AMERICAN MERCURY has asked authorities in these healing arts to state their cases fully. And it has also called upon medicine to give its view on all of them.

The first article in the series will appear shortly. It will be "The Case for Osteopathy," by Dr. Donald B. Thorburn, D.O., Ph.D. A graduate of the Philadelphia College of Osteopathy in 1923, he is a member of the New York State Board of Medical Examiners, and has been in the general practice of osteopathy for the past twenty-six years. The position of medicine will be presented by Dr. W. W. Bauer, M.D., editor of *Hygeia* and director of the Bureau of Health Education of The American Medical Association.

The articles on chiropractic and Christian Science, plus medicine's point of view, will follow in succeeding issues.

The American Mercury is indexed in The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Psychological Abstracts, and the Index to Labor Articles. The editors accept no responsibility for the return of unsolicited manuscripts, which must be accompanied by stamped and addressed return envelopes. Five weeks' notice required for change of address.

HOW *The American* Mercury



CAN MAKE
YOUR CHRISTMAS
SHOPPING PLEASANT
AND INEXPENSIVE

THE AMERICAN MERCURY invites you to solve your Christmas shopping problems in 5 pleasant minutes — and at a substantial saving!

Just relax in the comfort of your armchair . . . think of the friends and relatives with whom you would like to share your enjoyment of THE MERCURY . . . and jot down their names on the Gift Order Form at the right!

WHEN you give a year of THE MERCURY you give generously. You give not only enjoyment but insight — nearly 300 important articles, essays, cartoons, short stories, biographical sketches, poems and reviews . . . about people, politics, labor, economics, science and world affairs. Your gift is both a reflection of your own good taste and a tactful compliment to the intelligence of the recipient.

AND here is some good news for your pocketbook: Special Christmas rates save you \$1 on each gift subscription after the first. By entering or renewing your own subscription now, you save a dollar on that one, too!

WE cordially invite you to enjoy the convenience and economy of giving THE MERCURY — the gift that informs and entertains every month for a year — to your friends and family. Just fill out and mail the Gift Order Form.

MAIL it TODAY so that it reaches us in time to send each recipient a handsome gift card, bearing your name, before Christmas.

SPECIAL GIFT RATES

One Subscription—\$4.00 Two Subscriptions—\$7.00 Each Additional Subscription—\$3.00

----- CHRISTMAS GIFT ORDER FORM -----
THE AMERICAN MERCURY, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.

Please send a year's subscription as my gift to each of the following:

Name..... Name.....

Address..... Address.....

City, Zone, State..... City, Zone, State.....

Gift Card: From..... Gift Card: From.....

Name..... Name.....

Address..... Address.....

City, Zone, State..... City, Zone, State.....

Gift Card: From..... Gift Card: From.....

Your own subscription may be included at the special gift rates. Please check below.

ALSO ENTER MY OWN SUBSCRIPTION—☐ New ☐ Renewal ☐ Do Not

Donor's Name.....

Address.....

City..... Zone..... State.....

☐ I Enclose \$..... ☐ Bill me.

Special Gift Rates: One Subscription—\$4.00 Two Subscriptions—\$7.00 Each Additional Subscription—\$3.00

No additional postage for U. S. possessions, Canada or countries in the Pan-American Union; other foreign subscriptions \$1.00 additional per year. No charge for mailing to service men overseas



MEET THE MEN—

Who make the headlines

*Listen to Meet the Press, America's
Press Conference of the Air*

Meet the Press is presented in cooperation with the editors of *The American Mercury*. Each issue of the *Mercury* contains the transcript of one of the Meet the Press shows selected for its interest and excitement. Following are some of those who have been interviewed:

Senator GEORGE D. AIKEN
Senator CLINTON P. ANDERSON
ELIZABETH BENTLEY
Secretary CHARLES BRANNAN
Senator OWEN BREWSTER
Senator JOHN BRICKER
HARRY BRIDGES
Senator STYLES BRIDGES
EARL BROWDER
WILLIAM BULLITT
Senator HOMER CAPEHART
WHITTAKER CHAMBERS
RANDOLPH CHURCHILL
Attorney-General TOM CLARK
The Dean of Canterbury
Governor THOMAS E. DEWEY
JOHN FOSTER DULLES
Senator JAMES O. EASTLAND
GERHART EISLER
Federal Security Administrator
OSCAR EWING
JAMES A. FARLEY
Senator HOMER FERGUSON
Senator RALPH E. FLANDERS
WILLIAM GREEN
Congressman CHARLES HALECK
Congressman CHRISTIAN HERTER
Senator BOURKE R. HICKENLOOPER
PAUL HOFFMAN
Senator SPESARD HOLLAND

Senator HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
Senator IRVING IVES
ERIC JOHNSTON
HENRY KAISER
VIVIAN KELLEMS
LEON KEYSERLING
Senator WILLIAM KNOWLAND
Secretary J. H. KRUG
JOHN L. LEWIS
Senator HENRY CABOT LODGE, JR.
Senator RUSSELL LONG
Senator SCOTT W. LUCAS
Senator GEORGE MALONE
Congressman VITO MARCANTONIO
Senator JOSEPH MCCARTHY
Senator JOHN MCCLELLAN
Congressman JOHN MCCORMACK
Senator J. HOWARD MCCRATH
General JOSEPH MCNARNEY
Senator EUGENE MILLIKEN
Senator WAYNE MORSE
Senator KARL E. MUNDT
PHILIP MURRAY
Senator FRANCIS J. MYERS
Senator JOSEPH O'MAHONEY
DR. J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER
Former Secretary of War
ROBERT P. PATTERSON
EDWIN W. PAULEY
Senator CLAUDE PEPPER

WALTER REUTHER
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT
JAMES ROOSEVELT
Former Secretary
KENNETH ROYALL
Senator RICHARD F. RUSSELL
Senator LEVERETT SALTONSTALL
Secretary CHARLES SAWYER
DR. HARLOW SHAPLEY
Senator MARGARET CHASE SMITH
General WALTER BEDELL SMITH
Secretary of the Treasury
JOHN W. SNYDER
Senator JOHN SPARKMAN
Governor HAROLD E. STASSEN
Congressman JOHN TABER
MARTHA TAFT
Senator ROBERT A. TAFT
Governor EUGENE TALMADGE
Governor HERMAN TALMADGE
Senator GLEN H. TAYLOR
Senator ELBERT THOMAS
NORMAN THOMAS
Governor J. STROM THURMOND
Secretary of Labor MAURICE TOBIN
HENRY WALLACE
Governor EARL WARREN
Senator KENNETH WHERRY
A. F. WHITNEY

Radio Broadcast Over Mutual each Friday night 9:30 p.m., E.S.T.

***Television Broadcast each Saturday night over WNBT
9:30 p.m., E.S.T.***



The American Mercury

THE CASE FOR DEFICIT SPENDING

BY

JAMES ROOSEVELT

The question of deficit spending is of major importance in contemporary American political life. To a large extent, it divides the two dominant parties, but it also cuts through each of them. Mr. James Roosevelt, son of the late President and a prominent figure in California politics — there is widespread talk that he will be a candidate for Governor in the next election — defends deficit spending. There is an answer by John T. Flynn, author of The Roosevelt Myth and The Road Ahead: America's Creeping Revolution (see page 656).

THE Republican party, stunned by the solar plexus blow of the 1948 elections, was a long time getting its breath back. For a while, it ceased to be a party at all, if we use that word to describe an effective organization with an affirmative policy.

Recently the Republican National Committee reorganized. It deposed its old chairman and elected a new one. The victor's hairbreadth margin

of one vote indicates how little doctrinal unity exists in the party. Nevertheless, it was a victory. The new chairman is a "Taft man." When Senator Taft lost the 1948 Presidential nomination, it was considered a defeat for the Old Guard. The reorganization must be considered an Old Guard victory.

With this abrupt return to the tradition of the twenties, the party

recovered its voice. It was a sternly conservative one, now that the Old Guard had stifled the guerrilla liberals in the party ranks. Simultaneously, it found a new text, a new slogan with which to belabor the Democratic administration. Suddenly we found ourselves back in the old-fashioned era of strongly partisan government, with two powerful parties representing two strongly divergent points of view. The twilight zone between Republicans and Democrats has disappeared, and I predict it won't be necessary, before long, to hunt for "liberals" and "conservatives" in both parties.

The new Republican text is "deficit spending," a succinct phrase used by President Truman in presenting his plan to operate the government during the current fiscal year without raising taxes. The phrase has been used by many men before, passing without notice. Now the revitalized Republican party is using it to discredit the Truman administration as wantonly spendthrift.

As a rule, a slogan is worthless when it rallies only the minority to whom it has a *logical* appeal. To be effective politically it must have *emotional* pull as well — it must stir people who are blind, or prejudiced, or just uninformed.

"Deficit spending" is just such a

slogan, and it won't bear parsing. Its appeal is to blind, unreasoning fear, and those who use it as a political weapon surely cannot have measured the consequences. "Walk, don't run, to the nearest exit!" authorities warn us, calmly, when fire threatens a crowded building. The shout of "deficit spending," as it is used today, urges us to run in panic — to save ourselves no matter whom we trample underfoot. It is the old philosophy of devil take the hindmost, a primitive concept of society in which both victors and vanquished perish in the same fire.

For what we are risking is not merely internal trouble, a depression confined to our own borders, but the utter collapse of every government on earth now friendly to us. When we strip the "deficit spending" slogan of its emotional appeal, and reduce it to cold semantics, we see that it could easily be followed straight into another war. For to abandon the deficit spending policy now does not necessarily mean that we are pledging ourselves to a more economical government. The exact opposite may be true. And it *does* mean that the United States would be turning its back on the entire position it occupies in the world today. It would be a complete reversal, a return to isolationism — and this proposition proves itself, if we only think it through.

Before we follow this new siren song too far, we had better think it through.

II

No national problem of the American people can ever again be considered as exclusively internal. We can dispose of the internal aspects of deficit spending in a very few paragraphs. Whenever a government has a surplus at the end of the year, it has taxed its citizens too much. This should be elementary. If it goes on doing this year after year, it is operating under an unbalanced fiscal policy, and its legislature is using the taxing power for purposes never intended in the Constitutional grant. The Constitution specifically allows the government to borrow money, pledging the national credit. Nowhere is there either specific or implied power for it to collect more taxes than it legitimately spends.

It is *not* good business for government to take in more than it spends, year after year. The prospect of a fat surplus is inevitably a temptation to governmental extravagance. And nothing discourages the tax-eaters like the ordeal of going before the legislature, state or national, to justify a deficit. The people have no better club than this with which to enforce economy.

The ideal middle course would be for government to take in only enough to pay its necessary expenses, to the

exact penny. This being impossible, the taxpayer must choose whether to let his government play with a fat annual surplus, or keep his tax money in his own pocket until the time comes to settle the annual deficit. In times of high taxes particularly, the average citizen will usually choose the second course. Historically, it is the cheaper of the two.

This, then, is the "internal economics" of deficit spending. It is not theory. Until some better means of auditing the government is devised — and it probably won't come in this world — the deficit is the taxpayer's best guarantee of economical government. How big that deficit should be is a matter of policy, to be decided in the light of the government's other problems. This is the fact the Republicans ignore today.

Early last year, it became apparent that the Federal government was going into the hole to the extent of about \$2 billion this year. This deficit will be added to the national debt that already exists, bringing it, on June 30, 1950, to around \$256 billion. These are all big figures. Very few of us are trained to analyze them in their true proportion. It is their terrifying bigness which has made it easy for the Republicans to capitalize on the "deficit spending" slogan to stir instinctive, unreasoning fear.

But this problem of the national

budget can be understood by any reader capable of understanding his own family or business budget.

If a family with an annual income of \$3000 spends \$3000 or less in any given year, it has a *balanced budget*. It is "in the black," as the accountants say.

If the same family spends \$3600 in one year it is "deficit spending" to the extent of \$600. If the \$600 has been foolishly spent, the family is operating under a foolish fiscal policy which will inevitably bring disaster. This is what is charged to the Truman Administration today, by the Republicans.

But suppose this family, after frugally budgeting its \$3000, finds itself faced with a serious crisis? Suppose the mother of the household needs surgery which will cost \$600?

The head of the family — the "administration," so to speak — can do one of two things. He can refuse to let his wife have the operation, thus balancing the budget at her expense. Or he can take the drastic step of borrowing the money to pay for her surgery, repaying it over a period of years, if necessary. Of course it means he must either increase his income in the future, or cut his expenses some way.

But at least he meets the problem. This is exactly what we are doing today. We are buying peace on the in-

stalment plan. To use a new comparison, paying for a war is like paying for a car. It's not the original cost, but the upkeep, that drives us crazy.

The budget, obviously, should be the servant, not the master, of the household. This goes for governments, too. There is nothing particularly sacred about a balanced budget. Debt is bad, but there are worse things.

III

The "deficit spending" slogan originated among business interests who feared that the budget would be balanced at their expense, by raising corporation taxes. Most of these people are sound businessmen, in the best sense of the word. But if there is one thing that distinguishes them, it is their characteristic reverence for the abstract principle of the balanced budget. Their indignation becomes completely illogical when we realize that nearly every businessman in the country has operated, at one time or another, under a badly *unbalanced* budget. Most businessmen have had plenty of experience with red ink on their books, but they would be still more indignant if we suggested that there was any taint of financial immorality attached to their companies' records.

Just as the government has to go into the red now and then — just as the \$3000-a-year wage earner has to

—so does the businessman, the corporation, now and then have to spend more than it can possibly expect to take in. A fluid credit is inherently a part of our capitalist system. Credit *made* capitalism. From the huge bond issues which launched the railroads, our first “big business,” to the radios and stoves bought with a dollar down, a dollar weekly, American business has been built *on the earnings of tomorrow!* Let’s face it. There’s no disgrace in admitting it. It’s a record we should be proud of.

Take a corporation, for instance, with gross annual sales of \$10 million a year—not the biggest in the world, but certainly not a small one. Such a company would command any bank’s respect. Such a company may go on year after year, under prudent management, always spending less than it takes in, always able to show a conservative but steady profit to its stockholders.

But even a \$10 million gross exists only so long as there is a market for the company’s products. Many an otherwise solvent corporation has found itself faced with catastrophe in the form of unexpected competition from new processes, new machines, new discoveries, new styles and tastes in the capricious consumer market. Faced with such a disaster, the corporation’s management, of course, can always let the firm go quietly out of

business, the victim of obsolescence in the board room as well as on the assembly line. Or it can reorganize to meet the changing times and the challenge of the new markets. This usually takes money, and it often means scrapping plants that represent half of the stockholders’ investment. But management, if it wants to stay in business, has no alternative. It can go to the banks, if its record is good and its problem not too baffling. Or it can float new stock—in other words, “go to the public” for new money.

This is exactly what President Truman and the Democratic majority in Congress have done. They have “gone to the public” for new money. They have tried to keep the company in business on tomorrow’s earnings, so we can survive these hard times and enjoy tomorrow’s better ones.

Many a corporation head has lacked the nerve and imagination to transform his \$10 million corporation into a \$50 million one, when that was the only way to meet sudden new competition. Such companies quietly disappear, and the competition buys up their assets at receivers’ sales. Government could do this, too. Russia would cheerfully bid in everything the United States has, if the price was low enough. Communism is a new and terrifying product. It is tough competition. We’ve got to beat it on its own terms or go out of business.

In the last ten years we have seen this identical choice forced upon radio manufacturers, sellers and broadcasters. As a matter of fact they brought it upon themselves, with the perfection of the marvel of television. Many of the larger radio firms were able, with their cash reserves, to take the risky plunge into television. But many others simply did not have the cash in the drawer. There is no finer tribute to American industry than the stark, unadorned record of its audacious, imaginative conquest of television. As an industry, television is probably still losing money — lots of it. So did radio, in its infancy. So did the auto industry, oil, railroads, telephone and telegraph lines.

But they kept going to the public for money, and more money, and still more money. And the public, which gladly bought their products and services, gladly supplied it. The public is putting up the money for television today, hoping to get it back from the earnings of tomorrow. Thus our newest industry, the one big development showing huge prospects of new jobs, exists today only because "Big Business" has a *traditional* policy of deficit spending!

IV

There are only two ways to balance a national budget. One is to cut expenditures. The other is to raise taxes.

It was President Truman who first proposed that we raise taxes. This was during the 1947-1948 fiscal year, when there was a treasury surplus of \$867 million — the first time we had been out of the red since 1930.

The President's proposal was made to the Republican-dominated eightieth Congress. He warned them that we must tighten our belts — that the biggest menace we faced was inflation. He urged the Congress to siphon off excess buying power and cut the national debt with the same stroke, by taking a little more money out of circulation and using it to pay off the debts.

This Congress refused to do. The President next faced the budget problem before the eighty-first Congress, in which the Democrats had regained control of both houses. By now, the drop in tax income predicted by the President had become a stern reality. Business was slack. Merchandisers were refusing to rebuild depleted inventories. Sales were off, even though instalment buying restrictions had been relaxed.

They laughed when the President stubbornly insisted that we were not looking a depression in the face. He repeated his request for more taxes. He later withdrew it when it became apparent that a kind of psychic helplessness had gripped the nation's industrial and financial leaders. They

disbelieved "government theorists" who ventured to predict the future, even when one very important prediction had just come true. They had a whole lot less faith in business than the Democrats had.

With industry scared of its shadow, it was simply too risky to drain off any more of the national income into governmental cash drawers. As much as possible had to be left, to reassure capital. A tax boost was out. One of the surest things about democracy is that if the people, or any substantial portion of them, complain enough about taxes, their taxes won't be increased!

The only other way to balance the budget, then, was to cut expenditures. The budget the President proposed was around \$40 billion. Nearly half of this, or around \$19 billion, was for the national defense. In addition, the President's requests for ECA and Atlantic Pact commitments came to about \$8 billion. The ordinary overhead of running the government accounted for the balance.

Department by department, Congress combed through the budget, looking for ways to tailor the outgo to the anticipated lowered income. It was then that we heard the perennial protest against overloaded Federal payrolls. The injustice of this complaint became apparent when neither house was able to find any

substantial savings in the so-called "peace" departments such as Post-office, Justice, Labor, etc.

To cut the military budget much was unthinkable. There remained ECA and the Atlantic Pact. Congress appropriated for these around \$6 billion, instead of the \$8 billion the President requested. Otherwise this year's deficit would be around \$4 billion, instead of the \$2 billion we now face.

As I said before, the size of the deficit is a matter of policy — one that includes a lot more than cold book-keeping balances. In this case, the President and Congress came to an agreement. A definite policy was fixed. This is the one that would be reversed if the Republican protest against "deficit spending" were to be translated into actuality.

In 1928, the last full year of President Calvin Coolidge's administration, the total expenditures of the Federal government came to \$2799 million. Revenue was \$3741 million. There was a surplus that year of \$942 million. The national debt then stood at \$17,604 million — less than the amount spent this year on national defense alone.

At first glance, these figures make the Republican administration look pretty good. Coolidge's principal international financial problem was the collection of the debts of our Al-

lies of World War I. The Republicans controlled Congress, too, remember.

In consonance with the party's traditional "sound fiscal policy," Coolidge agreed only reluctantly to token adjustment of the money owed us by our war allies of only ten years earlier. The Hoover administration later took what was substantially the same position.

To the protest that they were broke, that they were facing starvation and revolution all over Western Europe, Coolidge is reported to have replied, "They hired the money, didn't they?"

In 1928, no one had ever heard of Adolf Hitler. Germany was a republic. Not a very healthy one maybe, but it was less than ten years old. Too young, we now see, to start paying for the sins of its fathers. But 1928 was an American election year, and for election purposes the budget had to be balanced! Americans were told that we might even *cut* taxes, if we could only collect what Europe owed us!

They couldn't pay, but we dunned them anyway, to create what accountants call a "forced balance" on our national books. We made the governments of England, France, Italy and other friendly, non-Communist countries humble themselves and sign new notes. And their outraged people, in turn, whirled on Germany and tried

to wring from that bankrupt, staggering republic "reparations" payments which would balance their own books.

Yes, we balanced the budget, but we threw every budget in Europe out of balance. We should have realized then that there was only one really critical problem — that of getting the German nation back on its feet, self-supporting, run by a strong, responsible, democratic government. There was only *one* Communist nation in the world in 1928, remember!

Yes, we balanced the budget — but the next year was 1929, and in October occurred the stock market crash which depreciated the book value of American industrial investment \$7 billion in a single month's trading! Compared with this monumental collapse of "prudent" private management, how serious does this year's \$2 billion government deficit look?

Would Black Friday have occurred at all, if we had not disrupted Western Europe's economy by our foolish insistence that they pay debts they couldn't then pay? How much has a desperate and bankrupt Europe cost us since then? Was it really worth all that, to balance the budget?

Within a few years, England left the gold standard. The German mark was destroyed and Germans turned like fools to the handiest strong man. The franc became worthless and France had a quick succession of gov-

ernments that was more like serialized anarchy than responsible capitalism. Spain resorted to civil war. Italy and Portugal adopted the new fashion of dictatorships — complete State control, a form of capitalism that thumbed its nose at us and our balanced budgets!

Obsessed with balance-sheets, a state of mind foisted on them by the front-office psychosis in America, the democracies of Western Europe threw up their hands. They were demoralized and disunited as Hitler rose to power — without, incidentally, paying a dime's worth of reparations! They did nothing when he militarized the Rhineland and occupied the Ruhr. They were still trying to balance their budgets, as we had taught them to do, when Munich came.

v

Today we are faced with the same old dilemma. History is repeating itself with such rapidity that it seems to be stuttering. Germany is once more the battleground for two bitterly opposed philosophies of life, of which the act of government is only one expression. This time there is even a border between the two philosophies, cutting Germany arbitrarily into zones. And once again the cry of the balanced budget is being raised.

Yes, we can again balance the budget — and throw Germany to the

wolves. Or rather, this time, to the Russian bear. And this time, every other staggering, debt-ridden, inflation-tense nation in Europe will go with Germany.

Make no mistake about it — *we are going to live under deficit spending for a long time*, and we may as well learn to like it. No matter which party is in power here, we can balance our budget only by sacrificing Western Europe, and with it the rest of the world, to Communism and the tender mercies of Soviet Russia.

We are engaged in an economic poker game with Russia, and we are winning it, and finding it much cheaper than war. There need be no war! We hold most of the good cards. Russia can help her neighbors only by weakening her own huge but half-starved body. Unless we starve our natural allies, too, Russia will have all she can do to keep her own house in order, once a measure of prosperity returns to the world outside her borders.

In 1938, the last of the so-called prewar years, the national debt stood at \$42 billion. It had risen, since 1928, by only \$24 billion. This included all the unpaid internal expenditures made under my father's administration, for relief and recovery. We had been unable to lift ourselves out of the worst depression in history on a pay-as-you-go basis.

In the years between 1938 and 1949, the debt rose to \$255 billion. The war cost us \$213 billion more than we could pay at the time. The rest was put on an instalment basis.

It is estimated that it may take five years to get Europe back on its feet. If business improves generally, then we may be able to balance the budget without cutting expenditures dangerously. If not, we may have to run at a \$2 billion-a-year deficit for five years, thus increasing our national debt another \$10 billion.

This is less than half what it cost to pull us out of the depression — less than a twentieth of the cost of the war. Of course future generations must pay the debt! But we are paying all we can today, without extracting more money from the very people who object both to deficit spending and to higher corporation taxes.

In 1928, when the government's problems were simpler and its bills lower, we had an administration which refused to listen to the stern warnings and the abject pleas for pity from Europe. It persisted in looking on the bright side, so long as it could refer to a balanced budget. The American people simply were not told the truth, then, about what was happening in Europe and the rest of the world, and what it meant to us. They are being told the truth today. Sometimes it is not a pleasant truth, but we have learned to face it, the hard way.

The Republicans have made "deficit spending" a party issue. The Democrats are ready to meet it on the facts. We say that the American people must finish paying for the last war or start saving for the next one. It's that simple.

THE CASE AGAINST DEFICIT SPENDING

BY JOHN T. FLYNN

IN THE article by Mr. James Roosevelt we can hear, I suggest, the rumble of the guns that will roar two years hence when the battle rages for possession of the American Treasury and the Bureau of Printing and Engraving. Crises, it seems, parade

through our age in dependable succession. And with each goes its ancient side-kick, the Deficit. First came the depression crisis, then the recession crisis, then the war crisis and now the cold-war crisis. Each provoked its own healing deficit. After the cold

war we must hunt another crisis. Mr. Roosevelt more than hints it may be a hot-war crisis. But in any event he assures us: "Make no mistake, we are in for deficits for a long time."

The crisis of the moment, we are informed, may be precipitated by the wicked demand of Republicans and businessmen for a balanced budget. This will not only breed a depression at home but will hasten "the utter collapse of every country friendly to us," will throw Germany "to the wolves" and push us "straight into another war." Of course it will bring with it another series of deficits which will probably lift our debt into the trillions.

The modest deficit spending which we must endure to avert these calamities is resisted, and, of course, by the criminal rich and the greedy businessman, who is willing to surrender Europe to the Russians to get a little cut in taxes. This is the preface to Mr. Roosevelt's thesis in the course of which he gives us a little lecture on the gentle art of deficit financing.

The world in the last half-century has been a great laboratory for those who find diversion in watching the vagaries of finance ministers who toy with the explosive components of deficit financing. We have seen some excessively curious versions of these experiments. But I must confess to no little surprise at the new slant on this

philosophy in Mr. Roosevelt's article. It is that Calvin Coolidge, whose nasal chirp of the word "economy" became a vaudeville item, was in fact a prodigal, while the true exemplar of economy was President Roosevelt, who used deficit financing as the only sound system of holding down government expenses. This is not thrown into his article for comic relief but is set down in all sobriety as a sound principle of public finance.

At this point we should pause to examine this unique slant on the great problem of public debt. It is not abstruse. It is just a matter of arithmetic and economics. Deficit spending means, for man or State, going into debt. Men, corporations and governments have been doing it time out of mind, sometimes for good and oftentimes for bad reasons. It is normally a dismal subject. But against the fiery background of revolution, world chaos and war, it takes on interest.

A man may go into debt for three reasons: (1) As a sacrifice for some desired good and without any hope of gain, or (2) to obtain a benefit at once which he will pay for while he is enjoying it, or (3) for the purpose of profit.

The man with the \$3000 income referred to by Mr. Roosevelt, whose wife's illness forced him to borrow \$600 for her recovery, did not incur the debt for profit. Paying for it

meant a sacrifice. This was a defensible use of debt. But it meant two or three years during which the family would have to do without many material things, in order to repay the loan. The operation has nothing to do with business.

Another man buys an automobile on the instalment plan. That is deficit financing. He might save for two years and then buy the car. Instead he buys the car, then saves and enjoys the car while he saves. Both these debts must be paid out of income earned in a way wholly unconnected with the debt. But there is another man — a farmer — whose farm implements are antiquated and inefficient. He incurs a \$2000 debt to buy a tractor and a group of modern tools. With these he can cultivate twice as much land, treble his product and treble his income. The debt results in an increase of wealth production and money income out of which he can pay the debt and increase his income. In this case the machines "pay for themselves," as we say. They create the money income out of which the cost is liquidated. The debt is self-liquidating. This is not so in the case of the sacrifice debt or the family car debt. All are proper uses of deficit spending.

But it is this last type of debt or deficit spending upon which the capitalist system has expanded so greatly.

A corporation borrows \$10 million and builds a factory to make farm machines. Farm machines are wealth. The debt incurred helps build a wealth-creating mechanism. The corporation can sell these machines and with the proceeds repeat the process of production, pay the interest on the debt and ultimately pay off the principal. This debt pays for itself. A government can do the same thing if it builds a plant to create material wealth which it can sell. But the government cannot well do this under our system. It cannot go into production of goods. That is a function of the socialist State, for which our people are not yet prepared. Hence in its spendings it is limited to a collection of mere services. It may borrow \$50 million and build a battleship. This is proper, indeed essential. But whatever the usefulness of the battleship may be, it produces nothing the government can take to market and sell. It gives us national protection, but it creates no money income. It is not self-liquidating. The government must tax the owners and workers in other, wealth-producing, industries to service the debt incurred for the battleship.

II

Now in all these types of debt-making there is a limit — for man and the State. The individual or corporation

dare not impose upon his enterprise a debt so large that it will eat up his profits. Wise use of debt has built the vast producing installations of modern society. But unwise use of it has strewn our industrial history with the wrecks of railroads, factories, shops and farms. Government dare not go into debt beyond its power to levy taxes. And there is a limit to its power to tax. National economic principles fix one limit. But the people themselves will always fix another. While government is borrowing and spending, it produces an exhilaration in the economic system. When it begins to tax to pay interest and principal, the effect is debilitating. Money borrowed to pay workmen for building public buildings creates an invigorating effect. Taxes taken from workmen to pay back the interest and loans to bondholders produce precisely the reverse effect. And if it is too great, the result can be disastrous. This is the reason why governments which are inveterate borrowers never pay their debts. No European government in seventy years has paid any debts. They may pay one bond issue, but only by issuing another. We still owe \$16 billion of the \$22-billion World War I debt. Last April we owed \$235 billion of the depression debt and World War II debt. In the last six months, we have increased it by \$5 billion. The favorite means of

liquidating government debt is by inflation, with an accompanying convulsion of the social system.

There are several schools among social reformers built on State deficit financing. One of these advocates government action during periods of depression. Depressions grow out of a halt in the flow of savings into investment. This should be met by government borrowing of those idle savings to be used in public works. This is a completely sound device. There is, however, another school which holds that the capitalist system is permanently disabled. The disappearance of the frontier, the check on immigration and the slowing down of technological development make it impossible, they contend, for private business to absorb all the savings of the people. To counter this, the government should pursue a continuous policy of borrowing these savings and using them in various national enterprises such as power, transport, communication and even in basic-metal production and, of course, in numerous cultural, recreational and welfare services. This, of course, would result in a considerable expansion of the national debt. But this, they hold, would be unimportant because government debt is not an economic burden. It is owed by the people as taxpayers to themselves as bondholders.

With this plan I am in complete disagreement. I do not concede the theory of our technological decay upon which it is based. I do not concede that public debt is not a public burden with grave economic defects. And I insist that the whole theory is incomplete without the other half which consists in the nationalization of our basic industries and the socialist control on the British model which is inherent in the plan. It is an immense stride toward national socialism. But at least it is a theory which has been supported by some degree of intelligent research.

Our government adopted this theory in 1938. It seemed plausible then when the debt was \$36 billion. Now it is \$256 billion. We have had nearly nineteen years of deficit financing. It has buried us under a load of debt. The interest alone was \$5.5 billion last year. It will be \$6 billion this year; and soon \$7 billion as short-term low interest notes are replaced by bonds. The interest cost alone is now nearly twice the cost of government in 1933. We are paying nothing on it. We are increasing it. Meantime the debt produces, like a corrosive chemical, its effect on the economy. And more deficits are unthinkable.

However, I find no indication of any awareness of these theories in Mr. Roosevelt's article. There are instead a few paragraphs which are called

"thinking through" the "internal aspects of deficit financing." They have something of the flavor of those giddy theories which blossomed in Germany after World War I when the poets, the philosophers and the ballet dancers took up economics in a serious way. The core of Mr. Roosevelt's philosophy is that there is something immoral in a government surplus. Whenever a government spends less than it collects in taxes, there is an unbalanced budget. This kind of unbalance, we are told, is evil. If, however, the government spends more than it collects in taxes, creating a deficit, this is also an unbalanced budget. But this is the beneficent type. As a matter of fact, it is claimed, a surplus is unconstitutional in this country but a deficit is lawful because it is specifically permitted by the Constitution. And since it is impossible to arrive at an exact balance, the wise course is to have a deficit. When taxes are high the citizen will always prefer the deficit. And "historically it is the cheaper course." All this ends with the assurance that "The deficit is the taxpayer's best guarantee of economical government."

III

This is the score on which the luckless shade of Calvin Coolidge is hauled before the bar of history for one of its greatest crimes. In 1928 he is

charged with collecting revenues \$900 million in excess of his spendings. He was thus *guilty* of violating an economic law of which he had never heard and of which I had never heard until I read it in Mr. Roosevelt's paper. "When a government has a surplus," we are told, "it has taxed its citizens too much. If it continues to do this it is operating on an unbalanced fiscal policy. . . . The prospect of a surplus is inevitably a temptation to government extravagance." This, however, was only a small part of Coolidge's crime. "He balanced our budget," reads the indictment, "but he threw every budget in Europe out of balance."

Now we might as well have the facts straight. In the fiscal year 1928, Coolidge collected \$3657 million in taxes. He spent \$3103 million. The surplus was \$554 million — not \$900 million. With this he paid off \$540 million of the World War I debt. There was an additional \$385 million received from the sale of public land. But this was a capital asset, not a part of current revenue. This was just one of the many surpluses used to cut the World War I debt nearly 33 per cent.

But as a result of Coolidge's budget balancing there is listed a group of disasters directly traceable to his insane prudence. "He balanced the budget but threw every budget out of balance" . . . "Hitler had never

been heard of" . . . "The next year came the stock market crash" . . . "England left the gold standard" . . . "The German mark was destroyed" . . . "The franc became worthless" . . . "Spain resorted to civil war" . . . "Italy and Portugal adopted the new-fashioned dictatorship" . . . It all originated in the struggle of European countries to balance their budgets, "a policy foisted upon them by the front-office psychosis in America." This horrendous indictment ends with the question: "Would Black Friday [our stock market crash] have come at all if we had not disrupted Europe's economy? . . . Was it really worth all that to balance our budget?"

Here is a collection of European incidents thrown together as a consequence of Coolidge's 1928 budget balancing. There was no such thing as a balanced budget in continental Europe to unbalance. It is curious history to say that Hitler had not been heard of by 1928 — the year he achieved his triumphant acceptance by the Ruhr industrialists. The American stock market crash was not the fruit of a balanced government budget but of the shocking unbalance of countless private business budgets. The German mark was destroyed five years before 1928. The franc never became worthless. It reached its lowest point in 1926 and by 1928 had

been completely reconstructed. The Spanish civil war broke from causes strictly internal and unrelated to these events. The Portuguese revolution came in 1933. And as for Italy, Mussolini rose to power in 1922 and to absolute power in 1925. There is a kind of irresponsible lumping together of these events, many dated long before or after 1928 and all the evil fruits of the crazy budget policies of Europe which we are asked to imitate.

Europe has supplied us for 70 years with horrible examples of deficit financing. This has ruined every country on the Continent at least once. In Italy the budget was out of balance 46 years out of 66. Mussolini balanced his budget only once in 23 years. And the historian Ferrero denounced him for imitating the deficit financing of France. The practice began in Germany under Bismarck to pay welfare and military expenses. After World War I, the German deficits ranged from 5 to 7 billion marks until 1923, when the presses went to work and shot the debt up to 7 trillions. The inflation having wiped out the debts, the people resumed their clamor for more services and less taxes. Then for fifteen years we heard in music, in poetry and in the light fantastic all the arguments for deficit financing that have been fished out of the economic ragbag of Europe — all but

one, namely Mr. Roosevelt's theory that it is the mother of economy.

Some years ago we were warned that "Revenues must cover expenses by one means or another. Any government, like any family, can spend a little more than it earns. But you and I know that a continuance of that habit means the poorhouse." The same voice warned us: "High sounding, newly invented phrases cannot sugar-coat the pill. Let us have the courage to stop borrowing to meet the mounting deficits. STOP THE DEFICITS." That was Franklin D. Roosevelt talking in 1932 when the debt was only \$20 billion. What shall we say now when it is \$256 billion? This is all I ask for now. Stop the deficits. This is what Mr. Doughton and Senator George, Democratic chairmen of the House and Senate Finance Committees are saying. And this is what President Truman has just said in demanding an additional \$5 billion in taxes to end the deficit.

Here I do not discuss whether we should continue helping Europe or not. I simply say that whatever we do must be done without increasing our national debt. If we cannot raise by taxes enough for all the domestic social schemes now afoot, we must weigh the relative importance of our European aid and American programs. If we cannot cut on European plans, then it must be on our domestic plans.

ONCE AROUND THE BLOCK

BY WILLIAM SAROYAN

CHARACTERS

PHILIP JUDAH

JIMMY LONDON

FRANCES GATE

JOE SMITH, a cop

A LARGE room in a broken-down hotel apartment in the Fifties, East of Broadway. Doors to: bedroom, bath, kitchenette, and hall. Window on street. A floor-lamp is lit, but no one is in the room. The dollar alarm-clock on the bureau rings and slowly stops. PHILIP JUDAH, a young man, comes in through the hall door. Fools with the door several times, turning the knob, wondering why the door was left open, or if it had been. He is drunk. He studies the door. Goes out into the hall. Comes back in. Goes through his pockets, removing all sorts of odds and ends: letters, pencils, pocket knives, a watch, a pair of dice, which he rolls a couple of times, the joker of a deck of cards, a handful of Automat crackers, which he takes to the window. He opens the window, thoughtfully crumbles the crackers onto the sill, and looks out to see if there are any pigeons. He comes back. Turns on the radio. Continues to go through his pockets. When the radio busts

out with loud music, he jumps and turns it off. He finds the item he is looking for: the key to the door. He tries it in the door, and the key is the right key. He works the key in the lock three or four times to make sure, goes out into the hall, closes the door behind him, locks the door, takes the key out, and after a moment puts the key back into the lock, turns the key, opens the door, and comes into the room, exactly as he had come into the room the first time. He walks into the kitchenette and comes out with a bottle. Notices the open door as he is pouring a drink, stops pouring, goes to the door, closes it, begins looking for the key again, finds another pair of dice, rolls them again, the telephone rings, he remembers his drink, takes a sip, goes to the telephone, there is a loud knock at the door which makes him jump, he quickly turns out the light.

PHILIP — Who dat?

JIMMY — [From the hall] Phil?

PHILIP — Who dat knockin' at da door?

JIMMY — [Coming in] What've you got all the lights out for?

PHILIP — Who dat?

WILLIAM SAROYAN, whose short stories, plays, and novels are too well known to require comment, returns herewith to these pages after an absence of fifteen years. The MERCURY was the first general magazine to print him. His previous contributions were three short stories, "Aspirin Is a Member of the NRA," "Ah-Ha Ah-Ha," and "Myself upon the Earth."

JIMMY — *Who dat?* Turn on a light, will you?

PHILIP — Who dat?

JIMMY — Phil, could you spare a drink?

PHILIP — [*In telephone*] Hello? Is that you, Harry? Well, send up some ice. What? Somebody on the line wants to talk to me? Who is it? [*Loudly*] A woman? Who is she? [*Loudly, amazed*] Frances Gate? Don't know her. That's a phony. Turn on a light, will you, Jimmy. What are you doing, listening to my private stuff?

JIMMY — I been looking for a light all this time. Where the hell are the lights? [*He turns on a light*] Here it is.

PHILIP — [*To JIMMY*] There. There's the bottle. Have yourself a drink. [*Into phone*] All right, let me talk to her.

JIMMY — [*Pouring and sipping*] Well, here's to you, Buffalo.

PHILIP — Buffalo? Where'd I ever meet you? [*Into phone*] Hello. Yeah. Yeah. Sure, if you insist you can come here. What sort of a looking girl —? I don't remember anybody named Frances. San Francisco? You that girl I met at Izzy's? Oh. That's the only girl I remember. Her name was Margaret. Isn't your name Margaret? Why, sure. I'd be delighted. I'd be delighted. Fred Wallace gave you my ad-

dress? What'd he do that for? How is he, anyway? Is he all right? Do you want to sleep here tonight or do you just want to say hello for Fred, or what? Sure. Always glad to have someone say hello for Fred. Is he all right? Yeah, sure. Come right over. Come right up. Walk right in. Don't knock. The door's open. The door's always open. How's Pete? Pete Cotter. Oh, you don't know Pete. I'll ask somebody else. Are you a blonde, getting along in years? Oh, I know you're serious. Don't misunderstand. So am I. You tell me about it when you get here. I'll do my best. You're not pregnant by Fred or somebody, are you? That's good. Yeah. All right. Oh yeah. Would you mind stopping at a drug-store and getting me a Pocket Book edition of *The Best Short Stories of Guy de Maupassant*. It's a quarter. Yeah. Okay, I'll be seeing you. [*He hangs up. To JIMMY*] How many have you had?

JIMMY — Just the one, and this one.

PHILIP — Have another.

JIMMY — Thanks, Phil. Boy, if you didn't live next door I don't suppose I'd ever get a drink, the way things are going.

PHILIP — What things?

JIMMY — You know.

PHILIP — How *are* they?

JIMMY — Lousy. *How?*

PHILIP — What the hell do you want?

You want to be a poet and have things go good, too?

JIMMY — I'm *not* a poet. I write prose.

PHILIP — Well, you want to be a writer of prose and have things go good, too?

JIMMY — I want them to go just a little better than they do for *poets*. That ain't asking much. If a man's got to compromise, he ought to get something for it.

PHILIP — Compromise some more, then. Compromise until you get everything.

JIMMY — I don't want everything.

PHILIP — What *kind* of prose?

JIMMY — How do I know what kind? I think it's great.

PHILIP — She's not pregnant and she's very serious.

JIMMY — That girl on the phone?

PHILIP — Frances Gate. That's a phony. Did you ever hear of anybody named Frances Gate?

JIMMY — Sounds all right to me.

PHILIP — There's something phony there.

JIMMY — Maybe it was the way she talked.

PHILIP — No no. She's got a good voice. She's got a pleasant voice. I never met anybody named Gate.

JIMMY — Another?

PHILIP — Sure. That stuff ain't expensive. If you'd compromise a little and try to write a little prose

that you *didn't* think was great, maybe you could surround yourself with good liquor and — stuff like that. How can anybody enjoy luxuries if they're poor?

JIMMY — Tell me about Hollywood. You never did tell me enough about it.

PHILIP — Hollywood? Never heard it. What kind of a name is that for a city? Something phony there.

JIMMY — Are those stories they tell about Goldwyn true or is that just publicity stuff, and what about Dietrich? Has she really got those legs?

PHILIP — What legs?

JIMMY — Those legs you see in the movies.

PHILIP — You mean Marlene Dietrich's legs?

JIMMY — Yeah.

PHILIP — Sure — she's really got 'em.

JIMMY — Did you see 'em yourself or anything like that?

PHILIP — What are you doing? Drinking?

JIMMY — I don't like to be sober all the time. Did you see 'em yourself? Those legs in the movies look pretty suspicious to me. You get sick and tired being sober. Sick and tired. Did you ever talk to her?

PHILIP — Did I ever talk to her?

JIMMY — Well, what'd she say? What kind of a voice has she got? Is it

true that they ain't got no more brains than a dope?

PHILIP — Who?

JIMMY — Actresses. With legs like that.

PHILIP — Like what?

JIMMY — Do they ever read or think about anything?

PHILIP — What do you want, Marlene Dietrich, or a job in Hollywood, or what? Or what?

JIMMY — You get tired knowing how things are. It gets to be stupid. What's a guy get up and leave a place like Hollywood for where you meet those people?

PHILIP — What people?

JIMMY — They don't know anything and live innocently. Is it true about that sunshine out there, day and night and night and day?

PHILIP — No.

JIMMY — What?

PHILIP — She *hasn't* got those legs.

JIMMY — Who?

PHILIP — Any of 'em. They've got the same kind of legs any women have.

JIMMY — What kind is that?

PHILIP — You know what a leg is. Let me show you. Here. [*Shows his leg*] Just like this, only female. It's all in the stocking.

JIMMY — Just as I thought.

PHILIP — What's the name of the book?

JIMMY — What book?

PHILIP — That you're writing. What book? What do you mean, what book? You're writing a book, aren't you?

JIMMY — Is that a book I'm writing?

PHILIP — What's the name of it?

JIMMY — I didn't know it was a book. It's called — Well, I never stopped to think of a name for it.

PHILIP — What's it about?

JIMMY — How do I know what it's about? Everybody wants to know what's everything about. What is everything about? I don't know. I never knew anybody who did, either. What's a fish about?

PHILIP — A fish is about [*He measures with his hands*] and then again — [*He measures vertically*] and then again [*He becomes an octopus — Suddenly*] What the hell do you mean? A fish isn't about anything. It's a fish.

JIMMY — [*Swiftly*] Right. Catch on? My book isn't about anything either — it's a book, the same as a fish is a fish.

PHILIP — All right then, what kind of a book is it, as a fish is a fish but of a certain kind, such as a whale or a shark or a herring. What kind is your book?

JIMMY — Whale.

PHILIP — [*Relaxing*] That's all I wanted to know — that's fine. If it was anything less than a whale, I'd ask you to leave.

JIMMY — It's a whale all right, don't worry about that — just tell me about their legs — [*Pause, suddenly*] How about the way they walk down a street — pretty?

PHILIP — [*Impatiently*] Same thing — same thing.

JIMMY — Do some of 'em roll it? [*He demonstrates, looking very foolish, as Philip watches, deadpan.*]

PHILIP — [*Swiftly*] Dat dey do — dat dey do.

JIMMY — And do some of them bump as they go away? [*He demonstrates this too, to the deadpan amazement of Philip.*]

PHILIP — Dat dey do — dat dey do.

JIMMY — How come sometimes you talk foolish like that? As if you were ignorant or illiterate, or somebody who never went to school.

PHILIP — I *didn't* go to school — besides, I'm bored. Not with *you*, you understand.

JIMMY — *You're* bored — you've got everything in the world, and you're bored. What are you bored about?

PHILIP — Just bored — just plain bored. Take those legs you were speaking of a moment ago so deliciously — so deliriously, I might say — well, *they* bore me, too. I look at 'em and then I look at their faces, and then I'm bored. Sex is what it is — that's all. That's all everything is.

JIMMY — [*Thinking about this*] I think

you've got something there. I think you've unconsciously identified the texture, quality and temper of our time. Do you mind if I put that down in my book? [*Thinking*] That's right — that covers it. Do you mind if I steal that?

PHILIP — That'll cost you ten cents. [*JIMMY begins going into a pocket swiftly*] You can pay me later, out of the earnings of the book.

JIMMY — Oh, thanks — but I've got a dime here somewhere. What do you think of Poe?

PHILIP — Poe? Who do you mean, the director out at Fox?

JIMMY — [*Almost shouting*] No, I don't mean the director out at Fox or anywhere else. Edgar Allan Poe — what do you think of him?

PHILIP — I believe he's fine. I believe there's somebody named Poe out at Fox — I believe I met him. A little fellow with a shawl and hunched-up shoulders — he acts very artistic.

JIMMY — Man, you sure keep thinking about movies, don't you —? I'm talking about Edgar Allan Poe. [*Recites*] Helen, thy beauty is to me —

PHILIP — Poe's okay. Never hurt a soul.

JIMMY — What do you think of him as a writer?

PHILIP — Overrated.

JIMMY — Yeah? What about O. Henry?

PHILIP — Wonderful — overrated.

JIMMY — Overrated in comparison to *who*?

PHILIP — In comparison to nobody. I don't compare *people*, let alone writers. A man is overrated in comparison with what is always possible but never achieved. You can't mention a writer who isn't wonderful. But they're all overrated. What is always possible is still unachieved. Keep pouring yourself a drink. Do you want a girl for the night?

JIMMY — [*A little embarrassed, but honest*] Well — if you want to know the truth — yes. Can you get one for me?

PHILIP — No — I just wanted to know if you wanted one. I *don't* want one. There's a girl on her way here, though, whoever she is.

JIMMY — Now, listen, Phil — I feel a little awkward about this — but I've been feeling low — Well, I'm lonely. Now, if this girl —

PHILIP — [*Hastily*] Sure sure — if it works out — sure.

JIMMY — Maybe you could *help* it work out a little. You know. After all, you've got a way about you. You're tired, and they like a man who doesn't leap at them.

PHILIP — Oh, I'll do everything I can — but why don't you take a run around the block and come back exhausted, flop in a chair and be irresistible? Don't say much. Speak

in a weary voice when you *do* speak, and be kind of bored with everything, including the girl. It might work.

JIMMY — Do you really think so?

PHILIP — Sure. I've been tired in Hollywood ever since I went out there seven years ago, and you read the papers — you know all the famous actresses who've had their names connected with mine.

JIMMY — Is that how you do it? By being tired?

PHILIP — Tired and bored — *consistently*, you understand. Up to a point, you understand.

JIMMY — What point?

PHILIP — The good Lord Himself will let you know. Go ahead — run around the block and come back. Just come right in and sit down — don't greet anybody. When I introduce you to her just stay where you are. Did you do any running at high-school?

JIMMY — Yeah, sure.

PHILIP — What distances?

JIMMY — The hundred, the two-twenty. The two-twenty low hurdles, too.

PHILIP — Okay. You've got a great background for women. Run the two-twenty low hurdles around the block and come back.

JIMMY — Hurdles? In the street?

PHILIP — Sure, for God's sake — are you a writer or some unimportant

kind of person? Go on out there and start running and taking the hurdles.

JIMMY — I don't mind trying to get tired, but jumping like that with no hurdles, right out there in the street — I might see somebody I know.

PHILIP — Well, do you want to be irresistible, or not?

JIMMY — Oh I'd like to be irresistible all right, if I could do it.

PHILIP — You can — you *can*. It's a familiar run — you've run it before. What is it — every ten yards a hurdle?

JIMMY — Ten or fifteen — I'm not sure.

PHILIP — Well, take as many hurdles as you can, so you'll get real tired and attractive. If you err, err on the side of extravagance, rather than on the side of — of — instead of on the other side.

JIMMY — It seems a little awkward, and if anybody knew of such a thing they'd think I was crazy — but I'm not. I've been thinking about this suggestion of yours very carefully — and I *need* to get tired. I'm on edge and too interested in Marlene Dietrich's legs. It's *not* foolish for me to get out and run. It's very sensible.

PHILIP — Sure. Go ahead.

JIMMY — [*Going*] Okay, Phil — and thanks. I'll only be a few minutes.

PHILIP — I'll be at the window to see the start.

JIMMY — Okay. [*Pause*] Hey, Phil, you're not making me do this for a laugh, are you? You're not laughing at me inside, are you?

PHILIP — Laughing? Don't be silly. I like to see a man behave intelligently, no matter how incredible his behavior may seem to others. My admiration for you has increased since your decision.

JIMMY — Oh I don't want to be a hero or anything like that, but I would like to feel that you were looking at this from the same point of view as myself.

PHILIP — Dat I am — dat I am. Go ahead.

JIMMY — Okay. [*He begins to go, taking a last gulp of the drink.*]

PHILIP — And don't stop to speak to anybody, under *any* circumstances. It'll spoil the whole effect.

JIMMY — Okay. If she gets here before I get back, well, you know — kind of let her know —

PHILIP — No, no — I want you to surprise her.

JIMMY — Okay. You understand these things better than I do. [*He goes. PHILIP gets up slowly and fixes himself a fresh drink, in the same glass. He takes a sip, then goes to the window and looks down.*]

PHILIP — Yeah — there he is. [*He waves to JIMMY*] Great writer —

great writer. [*He motions to JIMMY to get going, and from the way he moves his head it is obvious that JIMMY has started to run and leap over hurdles. PHILIP turns away from the window, very serious, not the least bit amused by what has happened. He listens to voices from the street — no words are understandable, but there seems to be a commotion. He listens. After a moment a pistol shot is heard. PHILIP goes to the window and looks out. While he is there, a girl comes into the room. She is FRANCES GATE, very pretty, very earnest, but a little sorrowful. She is holding an unwrapped Pocket Book edition of the stories of Guy de Maupassant.*]

FRANCES — Mr. Judah?

PHILIP — [*Turning*] Oh — hello. Oh you got me that book. [*He takes it, and takes her by the arm to a chair*] Well, thanks — I want to read something tonight. Sit down. You seem a little worried. [*Another pistol shot is heard*] Here. I'll fix you a drink. Would you like a drink?

FRANCES — I don't drink — but I suppose it would be —

PHILIP — No — no. Not for a minute. If you don't drink, I don't want you to drink. It's not good for you. Everybody knows that. [*He looks at her*] Now. Well, it's good to see you, even though I haven't the slightest idea who you are.

FRANCES — I'm nobody.

PHILIP — Oh nonsense. Your name isn't particularly — well, authentic-sounding, but you yourself make up for that. Gate — where'd you get that name from? [*Another pistol shot is heard, from far-away.*]

FRANCES — My parents.

PHILIP — Oh it's your *real* name?

FRANCES — Yes, it is.

PHILIP — Well, then, it's okay — it's a pretty name. It's got dignity, too.

FRANCES — [*Seriously*] Mr. Judah — I know how busy you are. [*PHILIP tries to protest: Not at all*] I've read every word you've written. I've wanted to meet you ever since I read your first book. I wrote to you three years ago when I graduated from Mills College.

PHILIP — Oh you did?

FRANCES — But I didn't sign my name to the letter. I didn't feel that I had a right to intrude into your life.

PHILIP — Why what nonsense! You have every right — every right!

FRANCES — I only wanted you to know that there was somebody in the world who knew about you — deeply — as I feel I do.

PHILIP — You do?

FRANCES — I only wanted you to know that somebody was grateful to you for your wonderful thoughts and stories and people.

PHILIP — Oh thank you, thank you.

FRANCES — But little by little it seemed to me that I should seek you out and talk to you.

PHILIP — Oh.

FRANCES — I know how ridiculous it is to want to meet somebody famous, but it isn't that, Mr. Judah — believe me, it isn't that I want to know somebody famous — a great writer. It's simply that I am sure you need me. You've been going through a lot of terrible times, I know — I *know*. You need me to talk to you. That's why I've come here tonight. [*She stops.*]

PHILIP — Oh.

FRANCES — I know it seems such a fat-headed thing to do — and everything I've said seems so fat-headed, too. But it isn't — it really isn't.

PHILIP — Fat-headed? Not at all — it's most wonderful, and I'm deeply grateful. [*Noise is heard down the hall*] Please — please feel at ease. Talk to me. Tell me everything that you have wanted to say. [JIMMY LONDON *breaks into the room, breathless. He closes the door behind him, and flops into a chair. This scares FRANCES, who leaps to her feet*] Please don't be alarmed, Miss Gate. This is my friend James London. He is a writer.

FRANCES — Oh — how do you do?

JIMMY — Hi. [*He waves lackadaisically.*]

PHILIP — Drink, Jimmy?

JIMMY — [*Bored*] Yes — please — make it strong. [*There is noise down the hall, and while PHILIP is fixing a drink there is heavy knocking on the door.*]

PHILIP — Come in — Come in. [*A breathless young COP comes in.*]

COP — Excuse me — I thought he came down this hall — Wheee, that was a chase. [PHILIP *hands him the drink, which he takes and sips*] A thief of some kind. I chased him around the block. [PHILIP *hands JIMMY a drink, too. The COP lifts his drink*] Good luck.

JIMMY — Luck.

COP — Swiftest moving man I ever saw — and *jump*? Every ten yards or so, like a gazelle. I didn't know whether to admire him or shoot him. I tried to stop him by shooting into the air, but he kept right on running. There was quite a crowd following him after a while, so I couldn't shoot him if I wanted to. I saw him run into this hotel and followed him to this floor. I guess he got away. He sure tired me out.

PHILIP — Well, sit down and have a drink. This is Miss Gate. Mr. London. And I'm Philip Judah.

COP — How do you do. [*He smiles to each*] My name is Joe Smith — yeah, that's my real name. Not Joseph Smith — just Joe. That's what my father put down on the birth certificate. Joe Smith, Sep-

tember 1, 1908, New York City.
[*He sits down.*]

FRANCES — I was born in 1919.

COP — You're younger.

JIMMY — And prettier, too.

COP — You're younger than you look — not that you look old or anything. It hasn't got anything to do with years. You seem grown-up, but not *obviously*. I mean inside.

FRANCES — Inside?

COP — Yeah. You have the kind of expression women get when they understand things — some women *never* get that expression. Being a cop, you have to look at people and try to understand them.

JIMMY — Yes, you do.

PHILIP — You're not seriously a cop, are you?

COP — I'm glad you asked me that, because the answer is: No — of course not. I earn a living being a cop. I may as well tell you, even though it embarrasses me, that I am really interested in writing.

FRANCES — [*Eagerly*] Are you? So am I.

COP — Is that so? I thought I saw something unusual about the way you look out of your eyes. You seem to have the glance of someone who is seeking — trying to see *into* things.

FRANCES — It's true — all my life I've tried to see *into* things instead of stopping at the surface. As I look

into *you*, I see far beyond the cap and uniform of a policeman to a most incredibly strong and incorruptible spirit.

COP — Oh now — you'll have these fellows laughing at me the first thing you know. I've never spoken of my writings to anyone before, let alone total strangers, but somehow or other it seemed to be a little foolish not to speak of it. After all, who cares whether or not I write, or you, or you [*Indicating JIMMY and PHILIP*] or anyone else?

FRANCES — Oh but they *do* care — I care.

COP — Well, this *is* surprising. I don't feel embarrassed. I was pretty pooped when I came in here a moment ago — maybe that's the reason I blurted out that I wasn't really interested in being a cop — that what I'm really interested in is writing. For that matter, I still feel tired. And a little indifferent. He was a great sprinter, whoever he was. He left me in the dust. I'm glad the people got in the way, because even if he was a thief, as they kept hollering, I wouldn't have enjoyed shooting him. It's not in me to take another man's life, thief or not. If I *must* shoot a man in line of duty, well, I'll do it, but I hope I never have to before I leave the force. I've saved up two thousand dollars, and I'll be leaving the force

in another couple of months. I'm going up to a little town in Maine and write my first book.

FRANCES — *Maine?* I think Maine is wonderful.

COP — Do you really?

FRANCES — I think Maine is the most wonderful place in the world. I'd like to go to Maine myself — lose myself in a simple rustic life.

COP — That's my idea exactly — get away from the noise and confusion of the world. I want to get to a place where I can feel things deeply.

FRANCES — So do I.

COP — Now, if I had others to take care of, it would be different. But all of my people are independent — they're not rich, you understand — they're just independent — married, good jobs, children — perfectly happy. I'm alone and don't have anybody to worry about, except myself. Sometimes I think it would be a lot more exciting and human if I *had* somebody else to worry about, but every time I visit my brothers and sisters things are just great with them, and they want to know if things are all right with *me*. My father and mother live off my father's pension and there's nothing I can do for *them*, either. They wouldn't think of letting me try to help them. I sent them a radio for Christmas last year, and they were very angry at

me for wasting the money. But sooner or later, I suppose, I'll be having somebody to take care of, and maybe after a while a few children. I'm old-fashioned and I'd like a son and a daughter, and maybe two of each.

FRANCES — Would you?

COP — Oh yes, of course. It's natural.

The instinct and longing for fatherhood is as strong in me as the necessity to write. I'm a sort of lone wolf spiritually — I like being alone, so I can think — but I can't fool my *heart*. It wants companionship — somebody for me to take care of, to think about, to talk to, to like. [*He looks at his wrist-watch*] Now, take tonight, for instance. In two minutes I check in — midnight. I go down to the Fifty-fifth Street Station, change my clothes, and then duck into an Automat for a cup of coffee and two doughnuts. I sit and rest a while, looking at the people. Then I go out for a long walk — sometimes I walk all the way down to the Battery, or along the river up to Grant's Tomb. I like to walk and look at things — not as a cop, but as an adventurer in the world. Then after the walk, I take a subway and go home. I read for an hour or so, then I go to bed. But walking is what I enjoy most — seeing the people and feeling all the time that somewhere among them is the one

I am looking for. I'll find her, too.

FRANCES — Please forgive me. Will you — mind if I go along with you tonight on your walk?

COP — Mind? [*Suddenly aware of JIMMY and PHILIP who have been drinking steadily and watching and listening with terrible fascination — JIMMY always on the verge of interrupting and PHILIP always gesturing him to be quiet*] Why, I'd be the happiest — Ah, this is really too wonderful. A guy starts running down the street. Running like an athlete, not a thief. People start hollering Thief, so naturally I have to go after him. I order him to stop, but he keeps on running. Then he leaps like a gazelle, and keeps running. I chase him, but he keeps getting farther away, so I draw my gun and fire into the air. Finally I chase him all the way around the block, into this hotel, up to this floor, down this hall, and into this room. And here, instead of finding *him*, I find — [*He looks at FRANCES with deep and boyish devotion*] Three of the most wonderful people I have ever met. And even though I'm exhausted from the running, I accept a drink, and start talking — and I tell them things I've never told anybody else before. Not even my own brothers and sisters. And now — you — Do you really want to go on the walk with me?

FRANCES — [*Very sincerely*] Yes, I do.

COP — I can't believe it. [*Suddenly*] But what about your friends? [*To PHILIP*] I don't want to break up your party. Perhaps *all* of us can go on the walk.

PHILIP — No, really — we couldn't. We're both very tired and have to get up early in the morning.

JIMMY — Yeah — tired — very tired. All wore out.

COP — Well, then — [*He looks toward the girl*] We'll walk along the river up to Grant's Tomb.

JIMMY — Yeah — that's a good walk.

COP — Thanks — thanks to both of you. I'll never forget your graciousness —

PHILIP — It's all right — have a pleasant walk.

JIMMY — Yeah — tired — tired — awful tired.

COP — Goodnight — then.

PHILIP — Goodnight. Goodnight, Miss Gate.

FRANCES — Goodnight, Mr. Judah — and thanks a lot for letting me come up and tell you the things I did.

JIMMY — Goodnight — goodnight. [*The COP and the girl go. PHILIP sees them to the door, then closes it. He stands a moment at the door, thinking, deadpan, as always*] I never saw a more beautiful girl in my life. Or a more stupid one.

PHILIP — What do you think that fellow writes?

JIMMY — Whatever it is, he's over-rated. [*Suddenly*] Boy, I hope you hang around New York a while. If you didn't live next door I don't suppose I'd *ever* get near a bottle of Scotch. I don't suppose I'd ever get a chance to break the monotony. Tell me about Hollywood, will you Phil? You never do tell me enough

about it. Does Sam Goldwyn really say all those things like "include me out" and "I think I've got the mucous of an idea"? [*He scratches his head, deep in reflection*] And Lana Turner — has she really got those — or is it that padding? I don't know what a man ever wants to be a great writer for.

CURTAIN

"THE THOUGHTS OF YOUTH ARE LONG, LONG THOUGHTS"

BY MARION DOYLE

When we are old the world will still be young;
New blades of grass will rise as eagerly
Where we now walk; with wistful certainty
The same dear indiscriminate vows be wrung
From warm young lips that never yet have sung
The score of disillusion that must be
The burden of each finished melody
When time's inevitable trap is sprung.

When we are old the world will still be young . . .
Springtime and youth recur eternally;
April, and lovers whispering *Sesame*
In Love, the language of youth's mother-tongue,
Shall find the gates of Paradise outswung —

What matter that the lovers are not we?

THE BLACK MARKET IN RUSSIA

BY DAVID J. DALLIN

TO THE uninitiated, the Soviet planned economy is a vast, impersonal clockwork of production and distribution. Directed, managed and operated by selfless men who set up quotas and fulfill goals, Soviet goods and services worth billions of rubles ideally are supposed to be produced and distributed in the best interests of all of the Soviet Union's 200 million people.

This is also the impression which the widely publicized five-year plans and the records of their fulfillment seek to convey. All published plans, reports and statistics refer, however, to production only, never to the distribution of goods. It is significant that almost all data referring to distribution is hidden behind a curtain of silence and secrecy. What is the standard of living of millions of Russian workers, of *kolkhoz* peasants? How do the millions of the "intelligentsia" live?

In a country like the Soviet Union, where living standards are relatively

low and goods scarce, the general "need" for goods of all kinds among the people is great. How do the 200 million Soviet citizens manage to survive in an economy where the average monthly wage of a worker is not enough to buy a pair of shoes, and a simple dress costs a girl at least six weeks' pay?

Yakov Karas found out. Karas is a young employee in the Department of Internal Trade of Byelorussia. Recently he was sent to Minsk to receive a large shipment of blankets for his agency. When he showed his credentials, the manager of the textile mill said, "You can have the blankets if you leave 25 per cent of them at my disposal."

Young Karas was inexperienced and unsophisticated. He burst out into a hot-headed tirade against theft, deceit and banditry. "Imagine," he told a couple of friends who lived in Minsk. "It's cold. The hospitals are short of blankets. And this gangster tries to have me turn over part of

DAVID J. DALLIN, an associate editor of the *New Leader*, is the author of numerous works on the USSR, including *The Real Soviet Russia*, *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy*, *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia* (with Boris I. Nicolaevsky), and *Soviet Russia and the Far East*. His last *MERCURY* article, "The Consistency of Stalin," appeared in January 1946.

our blankets to him. I shall denounce him to the authorities, and he'll get a few years behind barbed wire . . ."

"Do nothing of the sort," his friends advised. "The manager will deny everything and you have no witnesses. Better accept his offer and take what blankets you can get."

Defeated, Karas returned to ask the manager, "How shall I explain it to our accountant?"

"Don't worry," he was told, "The accountant will know how to take care of it."

Karas took the blankets and returned to his home office. He had a worried lump in this throat, but the accountant did not seem surprised when he told the story. He was neither angry or disappointed. However, he kept 10 per cent of Karas' blankets for himself.

Karas was too browbeaten and depressed to argue. He agreed and delivered the twice-short shipment to the storeroom. Only to have the storeroom superintendent ask for — and get — a few blankets for his family.

In the blanket deal, Karas was the idealistic, naïve greenhorn. The manager, the accountant and the storeroom superintendent merely were operating a sideline business transaction, thousands of which have been going on inside the Soviet Union for years. These three were not the only Soviet

citizens involved in the illicit operation. The manager and the accountant both are heads of large offices. Such actions are certain to become known to at least a few of their associates and subordinates. To avoid denunciations to the higher authorities, these people are taken into the circle. They become accomplices and share in the proceeds.

Some of the "appropriated" blankets may have gone to the wives of the officials involved. But certainly most of them found their way to the *rynok*, or "free market," at which goods are sold at prices higher than those set by the government for controlled commodities. Buyers search the *rynok* for such scarce items as shoes, furniture and watches. In the larger towns, just about anything can be located at the *rynok*, even though government stores often have bare shelves. Except on rare occasions, the police do not raid the *rynok*. Even though they know the "free" goods have come from transactions like those involving Karas' blankets.

II

The *rynok* is the result of a surreptitious economy inside the Soviet Union that is as vast and diversified as Russia itself. This world of free trade and free prices is ruled by profit motives and is supported by illicit transactions on a large scale. It is largely

hidden and winked at by a conspiracy of tolerant silence which extends from the highest government officials and the secret police down to the poor housewife who needs an extra cake of soap. The Russians have a name for this network of capitalistic, unplanned business enterprise. They call it *Blat*, and there is a Russian saying that "*Blat* is more powerful than the Council of Ministers."

Blat was born in the poverty and shortages existing inside the Soviet Union. It grew as a result of the eternal, human desire a man has to make things a little better for himself and his family. When government rules are strict, when economic conditions are universally bad, the temptation to break the law is great.

Take Sasha Gorokhov, for example. Sasha was a Pole who went to the USSR in 1940 to work as a tailor in an *artel*, or workers' collective. *Artels* are recognized by the State and included in five-year-plans. They are supposed to obtain all raw materials from the State and sell their products at fixed prices.

As a tailor in the *artel*, Sasha at first fared badly. His share of "dividends" amounted to only a few hundred rubles a month. He had no vegetable garden of his own, and no relatives among the farmers in the vicinity. Sasha was the son of a religious man. Reared under a code of strict morals,

he hated crooked deals and refused to do anything that was not above-board. As a result, there was never enough food on Sasha's table, and often his family had nothing but plain bread to eat.

One day, a neighbor asked Sasha to make a suit for him. The laws prohibit private work by *artel* members. But the neighbor brought the cloth for the suit and offered Sasha an extra yard for his work. This was also against the regulations, as payment in kind is forbidden. The temptation was too great for Sasha. He sold his yard of cloth on the *rynok* for 300 rubles, bought corn and butter, and for once his family was able to eat its fill.

Later, a number of his fellow *artel* workers went into the army, and Sasha was elected a department head. He began to wonder. Why was it that the other *artel* in the town was always busy, while his organization was idle half the time because there wasn't enough cloth?

Sasha's *artel* depended upon a large textile mill for its raw material. Sasha went to see the head of the Distribution Department of the textile mill. After talking about the weather, the war, and fabrics and prices, Sasha finally got up enough nerve to ask: Why wasn't his *artel* getting the cloth? "You can have 10,000 meters a month," he was told, "If you pay one

ruble per meter more than the fixed price." The deal was concluded. No receipts were given and the "extra" price, of course, was not entered in the books.

Sasha's *artel* had plenty of cloth, but the extra expense had to be made up somehow. So, some of the shirts made by Sasha's *artel* were diverted to the "free market." The managers of the State-owned stands sold a few of the shirts at fixed government prices to the customers who waited in long queues. The greater number was sold — as they say in Russia — "to the left," that is, on the free market at the highest price the traffic would bear.

Sasha hired a special agent to handle the free-market transactions. He made the agent a night watchman, so that the suspicions of higher authorities would not be aroused. The extra earnings of Sasha's *artel* were divided regularly and distributed fairly among the "shareholders." About thirty people in and around Sasha's shop knew of the illicit arrangements, yet no one was ever denounced.

At the textile mill which supplied illegal cloth to Sasha's *artel*, the additional income from such black-market transactions was divided among a large number of officials and employees. Many of these Russians were members of the Communist Party, and as such were subject to

examination and screening by their Party cells and the political police. Yet the practice flourished.

III

Communism in the textbooks is one thing. Communism as practiced by the Russian peasant, worker, and government official, is often quite another. To the average Russian today, the Soviet State is a powerful, impersonal giant. It is strong and rich while he, the poor, miserable citizen, is weak and constantly bedeviled by the wolf at his door.

Consequently, two ethical scales exist side by side in Russian life. Dire necessity forces thousands of Russians to evade or break the laws. The number of such law-breakers is large, so large that illegal practices constitute the rule rather than the exception. Poverty and economic pinches have brought about the attitude that State property is "fair game." The government will never miss, the Russian thinks, what is so little to it and so much to him.

This attitude is a partial hangover from the days before the Revolution. The Russian national character has changed little from the days of Chekhov's peasants. A Russian may violate the laws by selling thousands of rubles worth of government property and think nothing of it. The same men who engage in illegal prac-

tices remain honest, human and friendly in their private lives. Among individual Russians, the old "Western" code of morals still has strong force. You do not denounce your partner in a "business transaction." If your word is given, it must be kept. You do not cheat your neighbor — that would be unthinkable. But appropriating or diverting a little of the State's property? Making things a bit easier for yourself and your friends and associates? That is another matter.

The Soviet government tries hard to break this attitude. Laws are strict and heavy penalties are set. For some time, capital punishment was the penalty for certain offenses. But such measures have not changed the situation a great deal. The old attitudes and practices continue to exist.

Martin Sharov, crippled in the first World War, worked in a soap factory. He grew old and the director appointed him guard at the factory gate. One day, the authorities ordered that the workers' pockets be searched for stolen soap. The check was not to be made every day. The very fear of being caught with government property, the official formula stated, "will deter the criminal elements from stealing."

Misery is stronger than laws. Housewives and husbands working in the plant could not understand why they

should not use a few cakes of soap — a mere trifle in the rich and powerful Soviet Union — to relieve a little of their poverty at home. Martin Sharov was just as poor as the rest of the workers. He checked their pockets and counted the pieces of soap they had taken. But he let them go out with the soap and did not report what he had discovered.

Why did he count the pieces of soap in their pockets? So that he could keep accounts, to check, on the following day, when the workers gave him half of the proceeds from their soap deals on the *rynok*.

IV

Since there is a great shortage of cloth in the Soviet Union, checks are more strict at the textile mills. One woman mill worker, Tatiana, was caught taking a few yards of cloth under her dress. She was tried in a special court held at the factory. High officials and important Communists were present. An example was to be set. Tatiana, in tears, pleaded guilty. The director of the factory arose to make a fiery speech. He lashed out against "dirty disorganizers of our Soviet economy," and "thieves of the people's property." They were "elements helping our enemies abroad."

The mill workers assembled at the trial often broke into thunderous ap-

plause. But everyone, from the superintendents down, knew that the director himself had handed over a truckload of cloth to a mysterious stranger. The workers knew why Tatiana had stolen the few yards of cloth. They, too, were poor, and most of them had done the same thing. Tatiana's only mistake was getting caught.

The death penalty was demanded in a flurry of thunderous words, but Tatiana was sentenced to one year of compulsory labor, to be served at her place of employment. Tatiana would have to live in a prisoners' colony (corrective labor colony) on the outskirts of town. Each morning and night she would be escorted to and from the factory, along with thirty-odd other women prisoners. Her child would have no mother for a year. But no one was shot, and everyone from the departmental heads to the lowliest worker smiled with guilty relief.

A milder form of punishment in such cases is compulsory labor performed by a "prisoner" who is allowed to live at home. He is sentenced to turn over a share of his wages — usually 25 per cent — to the government. This is similar to the procedure followed in certain divorce cases. A worker often is required to pay a percentage of his wage to support his divorced wife.

So, Russians say, workers sentenced to compulsory labor at reduced wages are in effect "paying alimony to the State."

Pilfering goes on steadily at hundreds of factories throughout the Soviet Union. Pieces of metal, tools, lubricants, gasoline, rubber, plywood and lumber all drift away and into the *rynok*. The resourcefulness of Russians seeking additional income seems to know no limits. The most unusual case I know of is that of a sanitation squad, or "brigade," as it is called in the USSR. Sanitation brigades collect and remove the sewage from the houses and buildings in towns where there is no sewage system. The sewage is collected in carts and hauled away to a dump. To be a member of a Soviet sanitary brigade is to have one of the dirtiest jobs in the world.

In the old days, the founding fathers of Communism would argue that in the happy future, people in a Communist State would not be driven to accept such socially-useful but disgusting jobs. How surprised these idealists would be today to see the contented faces of the members of the sanitary brigades.

There are many provincial Russian cities which have no sewage system. In one of these, Ivan Solodukha was put in charge of his brigade. He was the only member who had an education and was clever enough to

handle the various "business transactions" which came up. Every morning, owners of houses and apartment-house janitors rush to Ivan. "Come quickly," they implore. "We live in filth; we can't stand it any longer."

"Today we must clean out the MVD buildings," Ivan will reply. "They have priority, you understand." Then the citizen knows that it is time to grease Ivan's palm. Ivan divides the proceeds among the other members of his brigade.

The sanitary brigades have other sources of income. People with private vegetable gardens pay well for the fertilizer which makes it possible for their gardens to thrive and their food supply to be increased. Also, the city assigns horses and carts to Ivan and his brigade to do its job. A couple of days a week, the horses and carts are used to do a little side business, such as delivering wood or furniture. In Russia, a horse is a valuable asset in all kinds of private business deals.

V

In such ways, the *rynok* and free-enterprise system called *Blat* are carried on. Even the secret police are involved. The Soviet police are probably the best informed in the world. Yet, except in political matters, the police are not as severe and unrelenting as you might think. MVD police-

men also are human beings with human problems.

Once a citizen's loyalty to the Soviet State is in question, no prayers or bribes will help. Arrests for political reasons are carried out with iron firmness. No influence by important friends will help, since a Soviet police officer knows only too well how closely he himself is watched. In political matters, an official wink might mean losing your job or your life.

But in the vast range of non-political offenses, such as theft, bribery, black marketing and even murder, Soviet police officials are more free to deal than they are when handling such crimes as Trotskyism, deviationism and pro-Americanism. The MVD man is the descendant of a long line of Russian policemen. He has inherited a tradition of severity mitigated by graft. The policeman is a poor man himself. He knows about the widespread *Blat* operations, and he feels for the poor devils who manage to earn a few rubles on the side. The policeman also has a healthy respect for the good things which officials in powerful positions can pass on to him, thus making his life a little easier.

The police official drops into a shop or factory. Promptly the manager invites him into his office for a glass of vodka. The manager is extremely polite, since both he and the police official know that there are irregulari-

ties going on in this particular business.

"Comrade Pogodin," the manager asks. "You have a family?"

"Yes, Comrade, a wife and two kids."

"Does your wife happen to need a pair of fine, custom-made shoes?" the manager wonders.

Pogodin's wife is badly in need of the shoes. But her husband is suspicious. Perhaps this is a trap — some sort of "provocation" (a familiar word in the Soviet Union). Pogodin shrugs his shoulders, uninterested. Then he scares the wits out of the manager. "Last week I saw a truck leave this shop at night . . ."

An hour passes, and vodka lubricates the conversation. Mutual interests are found, and the MVD man is satisfied that law and order prevail at the factory. The following week his wife and children proudly display new shoes "such as they wear in Moscow."

Even the police and the courts in the Soviet Union are "planned." Every MVD agency and each court must report the monthly number of arrests and convictions to the central authorities. At the ministry, the reports are compared and analyzed. On the basis of past records, present experience, and new directives from time to time, a figure is settled on as a normal quota of arrests. This

planned figure becomes the quota for the next period.

If the quota of arrests and convictions is not achieved, they do not assume back at the central ministry that crime is decreasing. Instead, they deduce that the police and judges are becoming lax. If the quota of arrests and convictions falls short, local police officials will be reprimanded and their promotions held up. So, a certain number of prisoners are collected regardless of the amount of evidence against them.

In Voronezh, two of the three Belov sisters were employed in a local factory. The two girls were caught one day in 1947 with a few yards of linen under their arms. They were on the way to the *rynok* and their explanations, of course, were unsatisfactory. When the third sister heard of their arrest, she hurried to her fiancé, an employee of the local Soviet. The fiancé went to see his old friend, the chief of the local militia. "Vasia," he asked, "Please let the girls go. What difference does it make to you?"

"I can't let them go yet," the police chief told him. "This is the last day of June. It is barely noon, and I can't tell yet whether the quota for the month of June will be fulfilled as far as the anti-speculation drive is concerned. You understand that if it isn't, I can't possibly let them go.

Wait until midnight. We'll see how we make out."

The girls stayed in jail until the fiancé returned after midnight. "You are lucky, Miron," the police chief hailed him. "We've over-fulfilled the plan — 112 per cent." The two men had a few glasses of vodka, and the police chief signed the order for the release of the two Belov sisters.

Then Miron and the police chief

had another glass of vodka. They had been men in need, and hadn't Marx said "to each according to his need?" The sisters of Miron's future wife were free. The police chief had done a favor for a friend who might be able to return the compliment some day.

Also, they drank to success. For another quota, another part of an official plan of the mighty Soviet Union was over-fulfilled — by 112 per cent.

THE HIGH HILL

BY KAYE STARBIRD

I know four slopes to all the little hills
And how the grass stands stiffly in the sun.
I know the way the gray snow sifts and fills
The stark black hollows where the rabbits run.
I know four slopes to every hill but one.

Over the highest hill the wild storms thunder
And the weak day goes down in scarlet pride,
But I shall never climb the hill in wonder
Only to weep to see the other side.
(After the little hills I cried and cried.)

I must believe in one hill worth the trouble,
In one hill cleaner than the wind-swept sky,
Where soiled snow never falls on frozen stubble
And the vast fires of sunset never die
Impoverished beyond a hill so high.

CARLOS ROMULO

BY SERGE FLIEGERS

THE President of the United Nations General Assembly stands five feet four inches with his shoes on. His diminutive stature and his high position have made Carlos P. Romulo an easy target for personal gibes.

Reports of American troop landings on Leyte described General MacArthur as wading ashore through waist-deep surf with Brigadier-General Romulo at his side. Walter Winchell immediately called a war correspondent to ask how Carlos Romulo could have waded through water that deep — without drowning.

At a recent UN conference in Paris, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Vishinsky shouted of Romulo, "This little man with the big, big voice, who spreads noise wherever he goes!"

Romulo, undaunted, got up and popped back, "I may be small, but I am like David, slinging the pebbles of truth between the eyes of blustering Goliaths."

This was no idle boast, because he comes of fighting stock and his courage in attacking formidable opposition

is renowned. His father, Gregorio Romulo, who later became Governor of the rich Tarlac province, was a famous guerrilla leader in the revolt against American occupation of the Philippines fifty years ago.

Carlos Romulo's fighting spirit was profoundly aroused while he was studying at Columbia University, where he received his master's degree in 1921. He would take long walks through nearby Harlem, and here he came up against the problem of racial discrimination. Certain restaurants refused to serve Filipinos. Romulo has been an angry defender of minority groups ever since.

Although he returned to Manila University as a professor of literature, he soon felt that he needed a larger forum than the classroom. He decided to become a newspaperman. Within three years he had risen from cub reporter to the editorship of Manila's powerful T.V.T. publications, which issue daily newspapers in English, Spanish, and Tagalog.

Romulo then entered Philippine

SERGE FLIEGERS, whose profile of Andrei Gromyko appeared in the September 1949 AMERICAN MERCURY, is a UN correspondent who is also the editor of the Inter Continental Press.

politics, and later was secretary to President Manuel Quezon. As he himself modestly explains, "Every time I had an ambition — teaching, politics, soldiering, or diplomacy — I would achieve it within a few years. Then I would have to look for another ambition."

Anything but self-effacing, he denies that he is conceited because he has no time for conceit. Nervous, tense, and concentrated in everything he does, he is nevertheless a devoted family man. He commutes weekly between Washington, where three of his four sons are in school, and New York, where he has offices as Philippine Ambassador and Chief Delegate to the UN. This does not leave him much leisure.

"When I was in high school," he recalls, "I used to play shortstop for our baseball team. But even then they used to say that I was more short than stop. In my youth I played a mean game of tennis and went in for fencing. Today, the only fencing I do is with words, across conference tables. Sometimes I get other exercise from gardening or dancing with my wife. When we have a spare moment, we put on a record and dash off a tango."

It was at a dance that Romulo met his wife. He married her not long after they were crowned King and Queen of a Manila carnival. Mrs. Romulo is pretty, but she keeps in the

background. On a recent trip to the Philippines, however, she did make one public appearance. This was to speak before a college for women in Manila. She explained: "There are three kinds of wives — the one who outshines her husband; the one who shines with her husband; and the one who glows faintly in her husband's shadow. I prefer belonging to the third category."

Her husband's reputation as a speaker and *raconteur* is well-established. Once when Notre Dame University was conferring upon him an honorary LL.D., he preceded President Roosevelt on the platform and delivered a brilliant speech. The applause was an ovation. As he turned away from the speaker's stand, FDR stopped him with the good-natured quip: "Rommy, you have stolen the show from the President of the United States."

Once when Romulo returned from a lecture tour which took him to more than 400 cities and towns in all 48 States of the Union, his eldest son, Carlos, Jr., now a law student in Manila, looked over the enthusiastic press-clippings and wise-cracked: "Pop, if you were to run for President of the Philippines, you'd win for sure — if they'd hold the election in the United States!"

Although at the age of 49 Romulo has had a series of successful careers

that might satisfy any four ordinary men, the UN president's ambition is undiminished. He admits that he would like some day to be President of the Philippines. If the corps of UN news correspondents had the deciding vote, his election would be assured. He has promised them a free plane trip to Manila if he should ever be elected. Newsmen write of the cocky little diplomat with tones ranging from genuine admiration to cynical disdain for his "spotlight grabbing." However, they have consistently given him the best press that any UN delegate has ever received, not even excluding Mrs. Roosevelt.

II

Long before Pearl Harbor, Carlos Romulo had been waging a one-man campaign against Japan. Early in 1941, after a tour of the Far East, he wrote a series of newspaper articles begging America to take preventive action against Japanese imperialism. He predicted a Japanese attack late that year. His warnings went unheeded.

Several months after America's ultimate entry into the war, Romulo was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for these newspaper stories he had written forecasting Japanese intentions. General MacArthur in person brought him the news of the award. The honor left Romulo incredulous. He stam-

mered, "General you are pulling my leg!"

MacArthur smiled. "Carlos, do I *generally* pull legs?"

The close friendship between General MacArthur and the man who served as his aide-de-camp has sometimes been misinterpreted. MacArthur, never noted for the warmth of his relationships, actually has a deep affection for "little Carlos." As for Romulo, his admiration and loyalty have never wavered, even though his ideas are much more liberal than those attributed to his towering friend.

Thus when news of the Pearl Harbor attack was flashed to Romulo's Manila newspaper office, his first act was to fling on his reserve officer's uniform and hurry to MacArthur's headquarters. When he reported breathlessly for his first assignment of the war, the General laid a hand on his shoulder. "Carlos, we don't want an upside-down Major in our army," he said unpinning the shoulder insignia. Romulo was chagrined to see that in his haste he had fastened his major's leaves on wrong way up.

He soon proved that he was fully right-side-up as a fighting man. His promotions were won under fire. He stayed in the hell of Bataan until the last day before surrender, and left only after MacArthur had strictly ordered him to do so. The plane in which he

was flown out was a makeshift which his men had assembled from several wrecks fished out of the bay.

One of the less amiable anecdotes told of MacArthur and Romulo is an apocryphal story of how the latter won his Purple Heart decoration. It was said that Romulo was in his tent shaving one morning, when there was a bombing raid on the camp. Although the bombs fell some distance away, he nicked himself with the razor, and had to apply adhesive tape to the cut. That same morning at a staff meeting, the General, it is alleged, asked about this injury. When the Filipino aide-de-camp began to explain, "Well, this morning, while the bombing was ——" MacArthur is supposed to have interrupted, "Aha! Wounded in action! Put him down for a Purple Heart!"

The true story is that Romulo was talking to an American soldier on the outskirts of the camp when a Japanese plane dove straight at them and dropped a bomb. The other man was killed outright, and Romulo suffered head-wounds and shock. Nevertheless, he has always been shy about wearing his Purple Heart ribbon.

Romulo's battles were not over when the Japanese had been defeated. He threw himself into the fight to build an independent democracy out of the political shambles the enemy had left in the Philippines. He re-

marked, "Liberation is not a process of flying flags and firing triumphant guns. People are set free, but for what purpose?"

A virulent hatred of Europeans and Americans had been strongly implanted by the Japanese. Romulo set himself to the formidable task of ending this. He pleaded, in speeches, for closer cooperation with the United States. Soon his opponents were accusing him of being a stooge of the American State Department and the tool of Wall Street.

He ignored his critics by putting to a practical test his theory that hunger and disease breed hate and totalitarianism, and that food, and clothing are effective antidotes against dictatorship. The little man with the big, big voice was made Philippine Representative to the United States Congress, and he hurried to Washington with this plea.

"Without help from Mother America, the Filipino might find himself set free — to die!" he cried.

Romulo tells a poignant incident to illustrate the psychology of those crucial days just before the Philippine liberation. He was tucking his small son Bobby into the first real bed the child had ever known. Since babyhood Bobby had lived in the wild hills, hiding with his mother. "This is wonderful," the little boy sighed, snuggling under the covers. "Yes, a

bed is wonderful," his father agreed. The six-year-old regarded him gravely, "I don't mean the bed. I mean knowing that when I wake up in the morning, I'll still be here."

Romulo's efforts to get American help met with success. The last conference of President Roosevelt's life was with Philippine President Osmena to discuss Romulo's plea for aid. One week later, Roosevelt died — on the day he dictated a memorandum urging help for the Philippines.

Today, there is no longer any question in the minds of Filipinos as to the country to which Romulo pays allegiance. His first loyalty is to his native land, then to democracy, and finally to a free world in which all peoples may have an equal opportunity for happiness.

III

A significant detail about Romulo's suite of offices on the United Nations floor of the Empire State Building is that it is the only one which has a front-door mat lettered with a large "Welcome." Nowadays, he is looking for similar "Welcome" mats at the doorways of the world's major ministries of foreign affairs. He needs all the friends he can get for the biggest fight of his career. The responsibility has fallen on him almost alone to bring to life and defend his thesis for Union in Asia and the Pacific.

This thesis first took shape when Romulo arrived at the New Delhi conference called by Indian Premier Nehru in January 1949. For some time Nehru had been considering a way to unite the people of Asia. His idea was that such a Union would be a ponderous "Third Force" in the world which, as he expressed it, "would not inherit the quarrels of the East or the West."

Romulo pushed through a unanimous resolution providing for a continuing mechanism of consultation between the nations of the Far East. But he realized that such a loose mechanism was not enough to cope with problems that were piling up on the oriental horizon. In a detailed report to his boss, President Quirino, Romulo set out his ideas: Let us call a conference, early next year, of the major Asiatic and Pacific countries: Pakistan, India, Burma, Ceylon, Siam, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, French Indo-China and possibly Korea and democratic China. Let us ask them to form an organization so that, together, they can strive for better living conditions and better understanding. Let us have Union and let us have strength. That is the only way we can save ourselves from Communism.

Preoccupied with a coming election, Quirino at first paid scant attention to Romulo's plan. It might still

be gathering dust in the Presidential files, had Quirino not remembered, at the last minute, an old political maneuver: What a President needs for re-election is a dramatic stroke in international affairs.

Digging out Romulo's memorandum, he found it no mere report but a blueprint for Asia's salvation. He called it "Plan for Pacific Union." This nearly fell apart when Chiang Kai-shek pounced upon it and tried to take it over during a dramatic weekend visit to Manila. Together with Korean right-wing President Syngman Rhee, Chiang had already planned a conference in Seoul for an all-Asia help organization — which would help them reconquer their own territory.

Liberals in the Philippines and all over the world set up a howl of protest. When Romulo, hurriedly recalled to straighten out the mess, arrived at Manila's International airport, he was met by a crowd carrying placards bearing such slogans as: "Hands off Chiang and corruption," and "Dr. Romulo, your Pacific Union is bad for us, good for others."

Romulo faced the problem with characteristic directness. He stepped up to the first picket, smiled, extended his hand, chirped: "Hiya, Tommy, how've you been?" The picket, one of his ex-students, first scowled, then an answering smile

broke through on his face. Excitedly, he dropped the sign to shake hands with his former professor. Romulo went right down the line, until he had "disarmed" the last picket.

He still had to placate the anti-Chiang forces. For eleven days he retired to the family plantation, then emerged with a simple solution: "Let us change the name of our proposed organization from 'Pacific Union' to 'Southeast Asia Union.'" With one geo-political stroke, he had slashed off China and Korea, too far north to be included in the new delineation.

Forty-eight hours after Romulo's announcement, American Secretary of State Acheson came out with a denunciation of Chiang and his associates. Any Union counting Chiang among its members would therefore have had the automatic "kiss of death" from Washington. Thus Romulo, who had originally been content to submit his plan for Union in the Pacific to the President of his country, and wait for collective action to take place, was forced to take the foreground and make a personal fight for it.

Romulo explained his strategy as follows: "If there is to be any successful Union, it must be non-military and non-Communist — but not anti-Communist. The present danger in Asia can be met by other than military, aggressive means. The greatest

danger to democracy comes from within a nation. No country has ever been lost to democracy that hasn't first been poverty-ridden and graft-ridden. I want to emphasize that the Union should not be military, but cooperative within the economic and cultural spheres."

Romulo made no direct reference to Communist China in this respect. But he feels that, although China's two leaders Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai are at present strictly following Moscow lines, they might conceivably be forced to "pull a Tito." China is a tremendous country, its people easy-going and traditionally individualistic. Their civilization is mellow, and cannot be successfully cast into the iron mould of Communist ideology. Perhaps a successful Union of Southeast Asia might present the only way to reclaim some 400 million people lost to the ways of democracy through democracy's own bungling and inertia.

Romulo thinks it can be done, without arms, for he is a great believer in a war of words rather than a war of swords.

He expressed this idea forcefully in his most successful speech, made to the opening session of the United Nations conference in San Francisco, when he said: "Words and ideas are more powerful than guns in the defense of human dignity. Treaties are stronger than armed bound-

aries. The only impregnable line is that of human understanding."

Even Vyacheslav Molotov, who was presiding, was impressed. He stood up from the President's chair above the speaker's rostrum and leaned down to shake Romulo's hand. He mustered his meager knowledge of English and beamed "Aksalant!" But, perhaps prophetically, the two statesmen's hands didn't touch. Romulo was too short to reach all the way up, and five foot five Molotov was too short to reach all the way down. In his polite effort he nearly toppled over, and Pavlov, his interpreter, had to grab the august coat-tails in order to prevent his chief from falling flat on his face at the feet of Romulo.

Usually, Soviets are not in danger of falling flat on their faces before Romulo. They recognize in him a fighter, and side with him when he lashes out at imperialist nations such as Great Britain, France, Belgium and Holland. But they side against him with equal vehemence when he demands freedom of information or a charter of human rights.

During the Paris UN meeting, where Romulo did a remarkable job as chairman of a catch-all committee saddled with the conference's most ticklish problem, he was honored at a luncheon in the sumptuous Soviet Embassy on the Rue de Grenelle. When toasting-time came, Vishinsky

proposed: "To Ambassador Romulo, the foremost orator in the United Nations, whose eloquence is so consuming that it sometimes consumes the orator himself."

Romulo chose not to recognize the thinly-veiled barb. He drew himself to his full height — reaching just about elbow level with his host — looked squarely at him, coldly proposed: "To the great heroic Russian people . . ." and sat down.

Even though Romulo disavows any intention of getting his Union into a fight with the Russians or any other enemies, it seems that he might have to fight his friends in order to make them see light.

IV

It is a curiously assorted team that follows Romulo on his path towards the Southeast Asia Union. Politically and culturally, there is no homogeneity. Three of the countries are Christian, three are Buddhist, two are Moslem and one is Hindu. Their people speak numberless languages, their traditions present a pattern of bewildering variety. And each country has its own problems.

India, the largest in area and population, also has the longest and most-difficult-to-guard frontier with the Soviet Union. It therefore wants to remain very much astride any problem the Union might have to face.

Indian Premier Nehru still toys with his "Third Force" plan which would make a dead weight of the Union. But his recent visit to Washington for conversations covering financial, technical and other help the United States can give India may have helped change Nehru's mind.

Australia, the next most powerful country included in Romulo's plan wants to start with a Union of Pacific Commonwealth nations, armed by Britain. The two Moslem countries, Pakistan and Indonesia, feel they are too much preoccupied with their internal problems to bother with Pacific get-togethers.

Other representation at his proposed conference poses one more thorny problem for Romulo. Should he invite representatives of the colonial territories such as Indo-China and Malaya? Their seething nationalism presents an easy prey for Communism, and Romulo feels he should invite the spokesmen of their people rather than representatives of the metropolitan power that rules them.

It is the smaller countries of the Pacific who have been most enthusiastic. The Premiers of Siam and Burma, kindly Peter Fraser of New Zealand, and Syngman Rhee of Korea, were so taken by Romulo's plan that they started an epidemic of Pacific conferences. In addition to Romulo's proposed meeting in the

Philippines and one that Australia's Evatt wants to call early next year, hotel rooms are also being prepared in Seoul, Bangkok and Rangoon for possible Union meetings.

Of all these, Romulo's conference stands the most chance of success. One reason is that during the last month, he acquired American support for his plan. Up to then, our policy in the Pacific had become muddled as a result of the China incident.

Our line of defense there first was along China's Yangtze River. General Marshall abandoned that and fixed it along the thirty-eighth parallel, which divided Korea into spheres of Soviet and American influence. With the withdrawal of American troops from Korea, our line retreated and lengthened, stretching now along Japan, Okinawa, the Philippines, Australia and bomber-vulnerable Alaska. Latest reports showed that even this line was crumbling, with the dismantling of our naval base at Samar, in the Philippines.

Now President Truman has decided to hold the line, and possibly even advance it. In a recent interview with Philippine President Quirino, our Chief Executive announced: "The United States will lend all feasible assistance to the countries of Asia in their effort to protect themselves against the Communist menace."

In the meanwhile, our Far East

planners, Assistant Secretary of State W. W. Butterworth and Roving Ambassador Phillip Jessup (a personal friend of Carlos Romulo's) are understood to be doing under-cover work for the Southeast Asia Union. At the Washington Dollar conferences with Britain they touched upon that subject.

Bevin's position, up to now, has been shrouded in a fog of British diplomacy. With Malaya and Hong Kong just one short, dangerous hop away from Communist China, the British have refused to come out into the open with their attitude regarding a Far East Union or alliance. Latest London reports also show Whitehall worried about the fact that the United States might use a Southeast Asia Union to build a "Dollar Empire" in the Pacific.

Presented with all these conflicting tendencies, this international patchwork of power politics, Romulo does not give up hope. The easiest task will be to make his fellow-Asiatics realize the urgency of common action. It will be more difficult to convince them that arms and aggressive military alliances are not necessary — and might even be dangerous — in attaining their goal of mutual security. But his most difficult task will be to convert the heterogeneous mass that now is Asia into a strong, clean-functioning mechanism for peace.

THE SKEPTICS' CORNER

by BERGEN EVANS



That fish fall from the sky

Small collections of fish have sometimes been found in city streets after an unusually heavy shower and the find always serves as confirmation of the widespread belief that fish occasionally come down from the sky, it being argued that in these instances they could have come from nowhere else.

A more probable explanation is that they have been flooded out of a sewer. Modern cities cover many square miles, areas that almost invariably include a number of small streams. As the city grows, these streams are generally enclosed in sewers through which, unknown to the manswarm above, they continue to flow most dismally. Yet they are still streams. They have their bright headwaters and sedgy upper reaches where frogs and minnows live their natural lives until perchance a cloud-burst sweeps them down under the city's streets and gushes them out of a

sewer to amaze astrologers, some zoologists, journalists and other dabblers in the occult.

Visitors to London may have noticed an immense iron pipe running diagonally through the Sloan Square Underground Station, between the track and the ceiling, without ever guessing that it enclosed the Westbourne, one of London's rivers.

*That the human eye overawes
the "lower" animals who avert
their gaze and slink away
abashed when God's image con-
fronts them with a fixed regard*

The usual proof of this belief is to glower at a lion in the zoo until such time as the bored beast yawns and looks elsewhere. If its rationale were valid, the lower in the scale the more the creature ought to be overawed, but it doesn't seem to work that way. You may fix a mosquito with a glare of stern disapproval and find him no whit abashed. Even King James I,

who insisted that "Kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called Gods," found the muscidae unimpressed. "Have I not three kingdoms," he once exclaimed in rage to an impatient fly, "and thou must needs fly in my eye!"

That savages are irreligious

Nothing could be further from the truth. Only civilized men have attained irreligion. Savages probably seemed irreligious to early travelers because their religion concerned itself with practical, everyday matters — such as cooking and making clothes or furniture. It is because the civilized man has *lost religion* that he feels it deals with intangibles and such vague states as life after death.

The ritual of a civilized man's religion is pretty well relegated to such times and places as won't interfere with his daily affairs and by various sophistries is kept within reasonable bounds. The savage performs it at all times and the more unreasonable it is the better he likes it. Among us, for example, certain groups engage in certain mild forms of fasting for religious reasons. Some won't eat certain meats. Others won't eat any meat on certain days, though by an astonishing quibble they decide

that fish is not meat. Simpler peoples, whom they regard as infidels and heathen, also fast, but in no such equivocal fashion as that. A good Mohammedan, for example, fasts from sunup to sundown during Ramadan. And when *he* fasts he *fasts*; he won't even swallow his own saliva! Charo, one of Hemingway's gun bearers in the expedition described in *The Green Hills of Africa* was thus distinguished in his piety. He was vastly admired by the other members of the safari.

That man alone has language

Investigations carried out in the past two decades have established beyond question that animals communicate with each other more elaborately than was previously thought. The great titmouse, Haldane tells us, "has twenty distinct cries that are uttered in different situations," most of which are learned only in the flock and apparently have social significance. It has been found that certain birds bred in captivity and then released are unable to mate for lack of the proper terms of endearment.

That a hairy chest is a sign of strength

The connection of hairiness and strength may have some vague basis

in the story of Samson, though the Bible makes it quite plain that his strength lay in God's favor and that his unshorn locks were merely the symbol of his consecration.

Excessive hair on the head is, today, regarded as an indication of effeminacy. Manliness is indicated by hair on the chest. That it will "put hair on your chest" has long been an inducement to lads to pursue this or that course of action or to eat or drink something or other. The assertion is always humorous but the association of a hairy chest and strength is serious and widespread. There is nothing to support it. Sandow and Swoboda were smooth-skinned men. The gentlemen who flex their biceps in the physical culture ads and promise a similar fearful symmetry to all who take their course are usually as smooth as the marble statues they attempt to emulate. Few heavyweight boxing champions have been particularly hairy.

That prairie and brush fires are sometimes started by the heat of the sun

It is true that long hot dry spells prepare grass and brush so that they will burn if accidentally ignited. But the unaided rays of the sun will not ignite them. Mr. A. S. E. Ackermann, the eminent engineer and examiner of

fallacies, recorded the temperature of the sunshine on the sand in Egypt daily for two months in the hottest season and found that the maximum did not exceed 140° F., a temperature far below that needed to ignite dry grass.

That the weather at the time of conception has an effect on the child

One of the very few pre-natal influences to gain anything like scientific respectability is the weather. For many years now, Dr. William F. Petersen, a "metero-biologist," has been claiming that the weather at the time of conception has a marked effect on the child conceived and he has gained a considerable following among even reputable physicians.

Dr. Petersen believes that "more unusual people are conceived in the unstable months of the year," particularly during stormy weather and under the influence of sunspots. March and April, he avers (or at least was so quoted in *This Week*, April 18, 1948), "are prominent conception months for outstanding men of science."

One of these, Mr. E. E. Thum, editor of *Metal Progress*, tabulated the birth months of 1426 men listed in *American Men of Science* (listing the birthdates on every tenth page from

Addis to Davis and from Scott to Zwicky) and, after making proper adjustments to equalize the length of the months, found that July, September and December were considerably above the average for births — *i.e.*, that the conception months that had borne most fruit in *American Men of Science*, at least on every tenth page of Addis-Davis and Scott-Zwicky, were October, December and March. Mr. Thum, however, being a true scientist, immediately began questioning his own conclusions and discovered, by further tests, that different sections of the alphabet indicated different months as more procreant, so that the spelling of your father's name as well as the weather has to be taken into consideration if you plan to be an eminent scientist. Still further investigation convinced Mr. Thum that in any tabulation of less than two thousand "the accidental variations are enough to throw any conclusion clear out of line." And once you get past two thousand, what does "prominent" mean?

That a married woman is not responsible for any crimes she may commit

That's how most envious men and spinsters phrase it, though some feminists seem inclined to feel that she is denied the luxury of being

convicted. Thus Miss Elizabeth Hawes in her essay, "American Women Don't Get a Break," complains that if an enterprising married woman commits a crime in the presence of her husband "it is presumed she did it under constraint by him and he is presumably responsible." "In other words," she adds bitterly, "in the whole United States of America it is assumed that no woman in her husband's presence has a really strong mind or will of her own!"

Let not our matrons, however, indulge their criminal propensities too freely in the security of this belief, for there are serious limitations to it. The statutes of Illinois, for instance, which are typical, state that she is fully responsible unless she can prove that she committed the crime in question "under threats, commands or coercion of her husband." (In which case he takes the rap.) And in murder and treason even that won't save her.

Custom, if not law, seems to permit a woman to kill her husband with impunity. All that seems to be needed is a reproach and a pistol for the man and a tear and a thigh for the jury. But now that there are fewer men than women, and women are coming more and more to shape our laws, and the need for conserving our natural resources is growing more apparent, we may look for a change in this.

MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

BY HOWARD A. RUSK, M.D. & EUGENE J. TAYLOR

IN A small community in New England last summer, a physician was consulting with the parents of an eight-year-old boy. Neatly dressed, the boy sat quietly by his mother. He did not attempt to follow the conversation, nor did his eyes seek out the many fascinating things to which small boys are usually attracted in a doctor's office. His handsome and affectionate face did not betray that behind it was the mind of a child of four. For John is one of the nearly half-million children in the United States who are mentally deficient.

John's parents were relatively calm as they talked over his future with the doctor. Both of them were highly intelligent college graduates, and they knew that something was wrong when John failed to start talking until he was four years of age. They had sensed it earlier, when all of his development seemed so much slower than that of his sister, who is three years his senior.

Finally, upon the advice of their family doctor, they took John to a mental-hygiene clinic in a nearby city where medical specialists, psychologists and social workers gave him a careful examination. They made psychological tests and a thorough study of his background and achievement. The doctors and social workers then gave his parents the news. John was feeble-minded.

Before that time, John's parents had high hopes for him. Now they realized that his goals in life would have to be based on his limited capacities. Tragic as John's condition is, he is still fortunate in that his family has insight and understanding, and that thus far it has been possible to keep him at home. Should his parents decide to have other children, or should they feel that John's presence in the home might hinder the normal development of his older sister, it might seem best to send him to a private school or a state institution for

HOWARD A. RUSK, M.D., is an associate editor of the *New York Times* and the author of numerous writings on medicine. He contributed "What Can Be Done for Cerebral Palsy" to the November 1948 *MERCURY*. EUGENE J. TAYLOR, who is also on the *Times* editorial staff, is field representative of the National Society for Crippled Children and Adults.

mentally deficient children. There are many excellent private schools and state institutions in the United States which conduct programs for such children; many children are far happier there than at home. But the cost of private schools is frequently prohibitive to the average family, and the good state institutions usually have long waiting lists.

On the basis of samplings both here and abroad, most authorities agree that, conservatively estimated, one person in every hundred is mentally deficient. This means that there are approximately 1.5 million mentally deficient persons of all ages in the United States today; and it also means that of the 3,950,000 babies born last year, at least 37,000 were feeble-minded.

John is one of this group, but he cannot be called typical, for the range of mental deficiency and its resulting problems is very wide. The feeble-minded are usually classified into three groups — idiots, imbeciles, and morons.

II

The idiot's intelligence is less than that of a three-year-old child. He frequently cannot feed or dress himself, or perform even the most basic personal-care activities. Nor does he have the mental development to protect himself from obvious danger.

The imbecile, having the mentality of a child between three and eight years of age, knows enough to avoid danger. He can usually take care of his personal needs, can speak a few simple phrases, write his own name and read short sentences. He can often perform simple, useful work, but only under supervision.

The moron's mental ability never exceeds that of the average twelve-year-old. Although he appears normal, he does not have the judgment of an adult, and as a result, frequently displays anti-social conduct. With proper training, he can be taught to do unskilled or semi-skilled work under supervision.

Some 12 to 15 per cent of the mentally deficient have definite physical traits by which they are identifiable. Among this group are the *Mongolians*, whose small heads, almond-shaped slanting eyes, thick tongue and lips, short, fat hands, and sallow complexion, make them bear a slight physical resemblance to some Asiatics. Many are also "double-jointed." Jovial and friendly, nearly all children of this type are on the imbecile or idiot level of intelligence. Highly susceptible to various types of diseases, the average life span of a Mongolian is around 30 years.

The *Hydrocephalic* child is one whose head is abnormally large; it has swelled because of an accumulation of

the cerebro-spinal fluids in the brain due to a blocking which is usually congenital. There is no treatment if the brain tissue has been destroyed by the pressure, but some patients may be relieved by brain surgery if they are operated on at an early age. Such children have minds ranging from normal intelligence to the lowest grade of feeble-mindedness.

Microcephalic children have very small heads that recede in the front, coarse hair, and, frequently, dwarfed bodies. Most of them are either idiots or imbeciles.

The *Cretin* also has a dwarfed body, but he is usually fat and has a dry, wrinkled skin, a disproportionately large head, and thick lips. Cretinism is caused by a lack of thyroid secretion, and some Cretins can be improved both physically and mentally by treatment with thyroid extract. Their intelligence ranges from normal (with proper treatment), to that of the idiot.

Excluding these particular groups, most other mentally deficient children look physically like mentally normal persons. Mental deficiency or feeble-mindedness is not to be confused with insanity. The mentally ill person is one who has lost his emotional stability, and who may have that stability restored with proper treatment. The mentally deficient individual has never had a normal

or mature mentality, and can never be given one. They are those whom Charles Dickens described as persons who never become older.

Speaking at the Governor's Conference on Exceptional Children in Chicago this past summer, Lloyd N. Yepsen, a New Jersey psychologist and executive vice-president of the American Association on Mental Deficiency, stated, "We no longer believe that almost all mentally deficient persons are so because of heredity or neuropathic ancestry. We are aware that physical modifications may account for almost one half of the subnormal individuals. These, generally, are offspring of perfectly normal parents, and may be characterized as the 'seconds' of the human race."

In support of this contention, Dr. Yepsen points to a study of the occupations of the fathers of 81 children under the age of five awaiting admission to a unit for babies. In the study, 16, or 20 per cent, of the fathers were professional men; 23, or 29 per cent, were employed in business; 3, or 4 per cent, were self-employed in business; 17, or 21 per cent, were skilled laborers, 6, or 7 per cent, were semi-skilled laborers, and only 7, or 5 per cent, were unskilled laborers. The occupational classification could not be adequately determined in 9, or 11 per cent, of the cases.

Mentally deficient children may come from any racial stock, from any type of family background, from any economic group. Some may be the offspring of a union of sub-normal persons, but others are of the non-hereditary type. Falls, blows, shocks, and other injuries, can affect the nervous system and retard mental development. There is, as yet, no clear-cut evidence, however, that syphilis or alcoholism in parents can cause mental deficiency in their children.

III

Although the history of specialized care for the mentally deficient in the United States dates back to the establishment of an experimental school in the Perkins Institute in Boston in 1848, not all states, even today, provide separate facilities for the care of the mentally deficient. The Perkins Institute experimental school was incorporated in 1850 as the Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-minded Youth (an example, incidentally, of the terrible, stigmatizing names we have frequently given many of our institutions). It has been located in Waverly since 1891, and is now more happily known as the Walter E. Farnald School. The first private school for the mentally deficient was established in Pennsylvania in 1852, and is now known as the Elwyn Training School.

In 1940, more than 98,000 children of school age were enrolled in special schools and classes for the mentally defective, and another 22,000 were in residential homes and institutions for the feeble-minded. Although there is a great scarcity of specialized institutions, not all children who are mentally deficient should be institutionalized. The needs of many can best be met within their own communities with adequate school and home training programs.

In its excellent pamphlet, *Forgotten Children*, the National Mental Health Foundation points out some things the family should know about feeble-minded children. Among them are:

(1) This condition is not curable nor will the child "outgrow" it. At first this is not easy to accept, but it is wise to face it.

(2) Though the child cannot become normal, parents can do much for his welfare.

(3) Social service agencies stand ready to help, and many states and towns have mental health clinics. They give examinations and so diagnose the child. In progressive states, there are social workers whose duty is to tell parents the facts about their handicapped child and give whatever help is possible.

(4) Habit and character training are possible for the feeble-minded child, even the low-grade. He repeats whatever brings pleasure and ceases

to do whatever turns out unpleasantly. Agreeable manners in the mentally deficient child can help offset his other limitations.

(5) Parents should not prevent their feeble-minded child from doing the simple work he can do. Setting the table, cleaning rooms and running errands can be required regularly of many such children. Disciplined and systematic training should be a daily affair.

(6) There can be over-protection of the feeble-minded child. He should not be imprisoned in the home, but should have enjoyable times outside. If not accepted by children of his own age in years, he may find comradeship with younger children of his own mental age.

(7) Possibilities of delinquent and anti-social behavior are very real, especially with higher-grade children. Wise parents will take steps to prevent their feeble-minded child from becoming the victim of delinquent examples and influences.

(8) The welfare of other children in the family should not be jeopardized by the feeble-minded child. One such child can "wear out" the family, the mother in particular, and drain its financial resources. In these exceptional cases, a mental health clinic or a social worker should be consulted. Other measures, perhaps institutional care, can relieve such a strain.

With adequate training, either at home or in a specialized institution,

many higher-grade feeble-minded children can be trained to work successfully. This was particularly evident during the war, when the shortage of manpower permitted many to find jobs for the first time. Properly placed in jobs which do not demand normal mental ability, and given adequate supervision, they frequently make superior employees, particularly in the many jobs which are so simple, repetitious or monotonous that they are dissatisfying to the person of normal intelligence.

As pointed out by Katherine G. Ecob in a pamphlet, *The Retarded Child*, published by the State Charities Aid Association in New York City, mentally deficient persons are found in a great variety of occupations, and it is not possible to make sweeping statements about what they can or cannot do. Stating that the usual recommendation, "routine work under supervision," is not always applicable, Dr. Ecob recommends that work for the mentally deficient should be within their ability, should be reasonably satisfying, should be safe for themselves and their fellow-workers, should not have great temptations, and should not be seasonal.

The present trend, Dr. Ecob reports, appears to be to train mentally deficient children, and also borderline cases, for personal service. For boys, this means such jobs as assistant

to a janitor, helper in a garage, worker on a farm or in a greenhouse, or as a delivery boy. For girls, such positions include errand girl, packer, or domestic assistant.

IV

A recent development of particular significance in the field of mental deficiency is the organization of groups for parent education. Such groups are not only helping their mentally retarded children, but are helping themselves, as they gain more insight and understanding of the problems which they and their children face. New Jersey has led among the states promoting such groups, and the New Jersey State Department of Institutions and Agencies, in Trenton, has prepared a manual for the formation and functioning of such groups.

The plight of the mentally deficient

is particularly tragic in that there is no one from their ranks to whom they can point with particular pride. The poliomyelitis victim has Franklin D. Roosevelt as a man who overcame his disabilities; the epileptics, Julius Caesar; the psychotics, Clifford Beers; the deaf and blind, Milton, Beethoven, Helen Keller and a host of others. But the mentally deficient, by the nature of their condition, are destined for mediocrity.

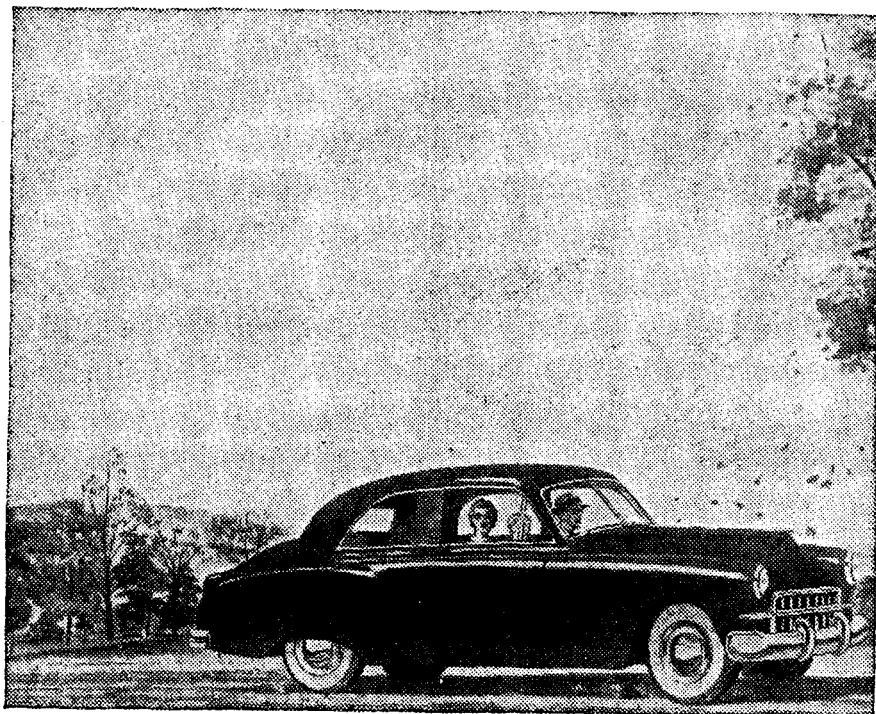
The greatest handicap that the nearly-half-million mentally deficient children in the United States have is not their low mentality, but the public's lack of understanding. Society's responsibility to these children who never grow up is to find out what they individually are capable of doing, and then to give them the chance to do it. Or, if they are incapable of working, to give them adequate facilities for custodial care.

PHRASE ORIGINS—56

TO KNOW WHERE THE SHOE PINCHES: *This phrase has a double meaning: to recognize a sore spot, or to imply that the best judge of a person's trouble is the sufferer himself. It is a very old English proverbial saying which has its counterpart and possible origin in a story told by Plutarch in his Life of Aemilius Paulus. Plutarch tells the story of a Roman who had divorced his wife. The husband's friends complained of his conduct and pleaded with him, "Was she not chaste? Was she not fair? Was she not fruitful?" In reply, the Roman took one of his shoes, held it up to his friends, and asked, "Isn't this new? Isn't it well made?" When they failed to answer, he added, "Yet, not one of you can tell me where this shoe pinches me."*

MORRIS ROSENBLUM

For Safer Autumn Driving



Autumn, with its crisp, cool days, is usually one of the most pleasant seasons of the year for motoring—but this can be enjoyable only when it is safe.

The President's Highway Safety Conference reports that the traffic fatality rate has dropped steadily in the postwar period from 11.3 for each 100,000,000 miles of vehicle travel in 1945 to 7.3 in 1948. While this is encouraging, the 32,000 automobile accident fatalities last year indicate the need for greater improvement.

Safety authorities agree that most

accidents are the result of *drivers' mistakes*. By far the most important cause of accidents is the failure of drivers to adjust speed to changing road and traffic conditions. For example, 55 per cent of all fatal accidents happen at night, when vision is obscured, and 14 per cent occur in inclement weather, when roads are slippery.

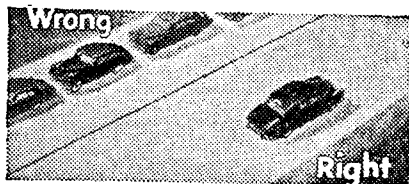
Traffic experts stress driving at reasonable speeds as one of the most important steps in reducing highway accidents. In addition, they make a number of other suggestions, some of which are illustrated at the right:



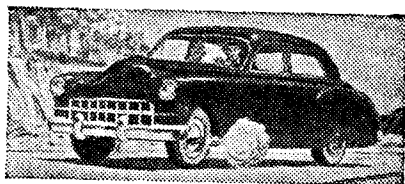
1. Vehicle defects are reported as contributing causes in many accidents. So, it is important to have your car completely checked at regular intervals to make sure it is in safe operating condition. Particular attention should be given at all times to brakes, tires, steering mechanism and lights.



2. Skidding on slippery surfaces is a frequent cause of accidents. To help avoid this, brakes should be applied with light pressure, then released and applied again. Jamming the brakes on will lock the wheels and may cause a skid.



3. Collisions frequently occur when cars are too close together. On dry pavements, a good rule is to allow one car length for every 10 miles of speed. This margin should be increased at night, on slippery roads, or at high speeds.



4. Emergencies need not always cause accidents if drivers know how to handle them. For example, when a tire blows out, keep a tight grip on the wheel and allow the car to slow down before applying the brakes. This makes it easier to prevent swerving or skidding.

The cardinal principle of safe driving is to keep one's car under control at all times. Only as more and more motorists observe this basic principle can the number of automobile accident fatalities be further reduced.

For more information, send for Metropolitan's free booklet, 129-L, called "How's Your Driving?"



COPYRIGHT 1949—METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

**Metropolitan Life
Insurance Company**

(A MUTUAL COMPANY)



1 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

Please send me a copy of your booklet, 129-L, "How's Your Driving?"

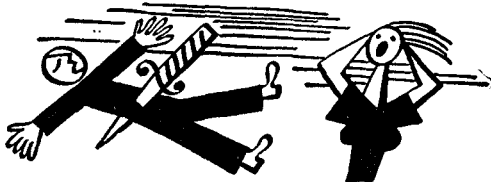
Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____

THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN



CLINICAL NOTES

Sensitivity. Why is it that no fat, or at least physically substantial, actor is ever described by the critics as sensitive? Let him be personally, professionally and artistically as sensitive as a violin string and the adjective will nonetheless be withheld from him and bestowed instead on some colleague, however lacking in the quality, who weighs under one hundred and thirty pounds and looks as if he had not had a square meal for a month.

* * *

Lost Persons Bureau. What ever became of Sartre?

* * *

Memory. It is possible that I may forget many things as the years roll along, but I doubt if 'til my dying day I shall fail to remember a ditty of forty years ago by the Messrs. Dumont and Lilly that bore the matchless title, *Plant a Watermelon on My Grave and Let the Juice Soak Through.*

Sidenote. Take away the epithet son-of-a-bitch from the contemporary American playwright and he would have to get someone else to write the curtains to his second or third acts.

* * *

Vaudeville. Seven vaudeville acts out of every eight are based on the theory that the average human being's capacity for acute suffering is limited to about twenty minutes. The eighth act, on the other hand, is based on the theory that average human beings do not attend vaudeville shows and that, as a consequence, vaudeville audiences are abnormal and hence able to endure exquisite pain for at least half an hour. The eighth act is accordingly known in professional circles as a headliner.

* * *

Souvenir. One of the things that has disappeared from the theatre, and to its amusement loss, is the old-time curtain speech. Now and again, true enough, there is a perfunctory one,

consisting of the routine simulated humility, from the star actor or actress, but the speech that was as much a part of the show as the show itself has gone with the past. Though on occasion, when some vainglorious ham was officiating, it could be pretty painful, it much more often added to the humor and pleasure of the evening, and I must say I rather miss it. Even, indeed, when one of the afore-said hams was in operation, the pain was relieved by the unintentional jocosity, as oldsters who recall Nat Goodwin's, Richard Bennett's and Lowell Sherman's ferocious speechifying against critics who had not sufficiently appreciated their art will attest. But for a few such humorless fellows there were many more who were not only very entertaining but who sent an audience home in an extra-happy mood and whose curtain speeches were always looked forward to with delight.

There was, for example, De Wolf Hopper whose comical remarks were relayed in a hoarse half-time that cued the audiences' ultimate, expected and regular demands for the recitation of *Casey at the Bat*, finally granted after such a wealth of coy protestations as would have done credit to a hypothetical Hollywood virgin. There was, for another, Raymond Hitchcock, he of the dry voice and glaring eyeball, whose speeches

were often a running commentary on the peculiarities of his friends and acquaintances out front and productive of many a sinister chuckle at their expense. And, for still another, there was Arnold Daly, the most enterprising actor of his day, who on the final curtain's fall would take his place, when the applause relifted it, at stage center and drolly expatiate for half an hour on the shortcomings of the commercial managers, the loveliness but adamant virtue of his current leading lady, and how he had had to pawn his overcoat, borrowed from a friend, to get enough money to eat while trying to get enough money to produce the play he was then appearing in.

Everybody seemed to make curtain speeches in those days, from Joe Jefferson with his brief "May you all live long and prosper" and Ethel Barrymore with her "That's all there is, there isn't any more" to Wilton Lackaye with his extended witticisms that scorched the pants off all and sundry, Francis Wilson with his boyhood Philadelphia reminiscences, and Louis Mann, the most expansive talker of them all, who in the course of a single speech would take up, sometimes seriously, sometimes humorously, more subjects than were covered by the average daily newspaper of the period.

I was reminded of the bygone art

one night last summer when I dropped in on one of the rural barn theatres where Guy Kibbee was appearing in a revival of *Outward Bound*. Kibbee's curtain speech, which ran for nigh twenty-five minutes, consisted mainly in his confidence that he had long privately esteemed himself for his ability to impersonate Napoleon Bonaparte and was now, for the first time, to try it out on a theatre audience. He thereupon, by way of preparation, entered into a lengthy historical account of the events leading up to Waterloo, which in its extended detail consumed about twenty-two minutes. This done, he announced that he was now ready to give his impersonation. It would, he said, depict the great general's farewell to his troops on the late field of battle. Clearing his throat, Kibbee thereupon solemnly raised his right hand, said "Goodbye," and walked off the stage.

* * *

Expense. The fact remains that, when it is good, the theatre provides relatively the most economical way in which to spend an enjoyable evening. When the gods are with it, only such folk as relish moving pictures and radio quiz programs will believe that you can elsewhere find an equal pleasure, stimulation and satisfaction for the same amount of money. What, after all, are the theatre's immediate competitors? First, a good, leisurely

dinner beginning around eight o'clock or so. But any first-rate dinner in four present cases out of five costs considerably more than the price of a theatre ticket. Furthermore, since only the kind of person who venerates the movies and quizzes can visualize a satisfactory dinner without alcoholic accompaniment, the cost doubles and more often triples that of the ticket.

Secondly, there is the argument of the home-lover. Why not, he asks, stay comfortably at home and save money all around? But staying at home night after night without any outside diversion is conducive to exasperating tedium and maybe even ultimate suicide, except possibly in the case of septuagenarians, incurable Dickens addicts, recent bridegrooms, and the family cat. Thirdly, the opera. Here the argument takes on a small measure of sense, the measure being small because, save for the rare occasions when some acceptable new work is presented, going to the same old operas one has heard regularly for the last three or four decades makes staying at home take on even more sense.

* * *

However. The recent crusade against and suppression of speculators who sold tickets to *South Pacific* 'way above the box-office price listed on them was based, among other things,

on the idea that the theatre is not a luxury but a cultural necessity and that the public at large should be able to attend it without having to pay out fancy money to the scalpers. The listed price of tickets for *South Pacific*, including tax, is \$6.60. The fee legally chargeable by such registered brokers as Tyson and McBride is \$.90, making a total per ticket of \$7.50. If that doesn't constitute a luxury for many people, I don't know the meaning of luxuries under present economic conditions. Just where lies the crime of charging several dollars extra to that man who already can afford to pay \$7.50 for a couple of hours at a musical show, I, for one, can not understand.

* * *

Definition. Actress: One who thinks she could do it much better than the one whose performance she is watching.

* * *

Reprise. May I repeat that those persons who insist that the theatre is simply a place for light amusement, who say that they go to it solely to be amused or for a good laugh, and who consequently are looked down the nose at by those who view it as something loftier have at least one piece of evidence in support of their contention. What is more, the evidence is supplied by the most influential of the very persons who

view them down that nose. I refer to the professional commentators on the theatre and their reactions to the departure through death of its more eminent players.

Who, when they pass on, twang most touchingly the heartstrings of these æsthetes? Are they the conspicuous dramatic actors or the low comedians? If you are a reader of the newspapers and the periodicals, I needn't tell you. Let a Lew Fields, Jimmy Powers, Frank Tinney, Joe Jackson, W. C. Fields, Willie Howard, or Marie Dressler go to his or her Maker — indeed, let a Joe Cook even so much as announce he is retiring from the stage — and the pens and typewriters of the Ibsenites and Chekhovians go wistful with a vengeance. Yet let a Bernhardt or Terry, or a Salvini or Tree, shuffle off the mortal coil and there will be solemn tributes to the deceased's genius but nary the indicated sign of a heart-twinge or moist eye. It is the funny boys and girls whose passing always uncorks the real sentiment; the serious actors and actresses get only critically minded testimonials here and there on a few occasions furbished, in the case of an actress, with a story of how back in the early 1890s her devotees removed the horses from her carriage and pulled her all the way from Twelfth Street to the Brevoort or an account of the love letters Bernard

Shaw once wrote to her or the painting the admiring Jimmy Whistler once did of her.

I have been reading the obituaries of stage folk for something like forty-five years now, and I have still to engage one that in its treatment of a great serious dramatic star shows half the genuine sadness, half the honest tenderness and affection, or one third the sense of deep loss in the passing that has been shown in the instance

of a low comedian whose biggest contribution to dramatic art consisted in falling drolly off a rickety bicycle or stumbling over an imaginary something and landing ludicrously on his behind. It was not the greatest Hamlet the American stage had seen who on his death moved the critics to tears; it was a player whose specialty was making wisecracks while hopping through a whirling rope.

PIONEER

BY MAY WILLIAMS WARD

Jonathan was busy. He made boxes:
A tool chest, a wagon bed, a foursquare granary,
a house of logs with puncheon floor
And a letter-box with a key.

Jonathan was happy. He made boxes:
A cupboard for his Mary, a fragrant cedar chest
And a cradle carved from walnut
Where their child-to-be might rest.

Jonathan was sorrowful. He made boxes
To hold his father and his friend and many another more
And . . . Mary too, when hooded plague
Knocked at their low plank door.

But Jonathan must live on. He made boxes.
Seasoning and shaping heart of the maple tree
Into violins to sing for him
Love and agony.

HECTOR McNEIL MEETS THE PRESS

Leader of the British delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, Hector McNeil has been an important figure there for three years now. And as Minister of State in the British Labour government, he is second only to Ernest Bevin in the direction of his country's foreign policy. On a recent broadcast of Meet the Press, presented by the Mutual Broadcasting System in cooperation with the editors of THE AMERICAN MERCURY, Mr. McNeil gave his views on a number of pressing issues. A slightly cut version of that broadcast follows.

THE participants in the broadcast, aside from Mr. McNeil, were Michael Fry of Reuters, Glenn Neville of the New York *Daily Mirror*, Lowell Limpus of the New York *Daily News*, and Murray Davis of the New York *World-Telegram*. Lawrence E. Spivak, editor of the *MERCURY*, presided.

LIMPUS: Mr. McNeil, a couple of months ago in Scotland, you made a speech which attracted considerable attention in this country. You were quoted as saying that Russia was playing with dynamite in her treatment of Yugoslavia, but that you didn't believe she actually planned war. In view of recent developments, do you still retain that belief?

McNEIL: Yes, I do. I don't think that from its political philosophy Russia would be likely to undertake war. Russia would have more to lose

than to gain by war. But, of course, anyone who takes the chances that Russia is frequently taking, depending upon the tolerance and the reluctance of the democratic powers, is literally playing with dynamite, and I won't miss a chance of saying that any time.

DAVIS: In the light of the reported Russian solving of the atomic bomb, do you think that threat is coming nearer?

McNEIL: Well, of course, I'd be a fool to deny that the knowledge that there has been an atomic explosion, if you'll pardon my phrase, in Russia makes a very big difference in the situation. But I don't know any reason why I should conclude that that will make a difference in her policy, and therefore I know of no reason why I should alter the opinion which I offered earlier.

NEVILLE: Do you think, Mr. Minister, that there is any possibility of

developing a system of international control of atomic energy through the United Nations?

MCNEIL: I think that the best chance we have still rests in the United Nations. But, of course, so far Soviet Russia has refused to take any part in sponsoring the proposals which the technicians as well as the politicians think are the only proposals which would lead to world safety through adequate international control.

LIMPUS: Mr. McNeil, two years ago in the United Nations I think I heard you offer to waive the British veto against membership applications. Is my memory correct on that one?

MCNEIL: Quite correct.

LIMPUS: Is that offer still good?

MCNEIL: It wasn't an offer. It was an assurance that we would not use the veto in connection with membership applications because we did not think, in terms of the San Francisco discussion, that the veto was meant to apply to such procedural matters. We thought the veto should be used only in enforcement, and in matters of that dimension. And what I said then on behalf of my government still holds.

DAVIS: I'd like to get away from speculation and get down to something that you know about personally. Do you think that the

Labour government of England has achieved the things that you thought it was going to achieve?

MCNEIL: I think the Labour government has achieved more than any other government in these circumstances could have achieved. No government ever does as much as it hopes to do. But the Labour government has, for example, maintained full employment in our country, a feature we've never had in peacetime. Our government has raised our exports by more than 40 per cent against the 1938 figure. Our government has maintained a high standard of living — not as high as yours, but a very high standard of living — and extended social services which the people wanted and needed badly. And our record is better, let me say modestly, than the record of any other country in Europe which was at war.

DAVIS: Do you mean to say that the individual laborer in England is better off today than he was just before the war or just before your government took over?

MCNEIL: Certainly.

DAVIS: On what do you base that?

MCNEIL: Well, I'll offer you a whole range of figures. Let me put it this way — our boys and girls are taller and heavier than they ever were in our recorded history. I'm a Scots-

man: A town of Glasgow has kept careful records of its school-children, and we're able to show, in terms of height, weight, and general health, that our children have improved. And if the children of a nation are healthy and improving, then a nation has every right to hold up its head.

DAVIS: As your children have grown, though, so has your debt. Now, where did this growth come from?

MCNEIL: That's a fair question and a difficult one. Of course our children couldn't have grown without wheat, and we couldn't have bought wheat without dollars. But on the other hand, our social services don't depend upon dollars, and our social services have been erected upon the increased production which our people — and by "our people" I don't mean only the working people, I mean pretty well everyone in Britain, from the bottom to the top — have built up. I've already quoted you figures, and believe me, I can quote some almost *ad nauseam*.

SPIVAK: Mr. McNeil, you may be able to go on quoting figures indefinitely, but almost everybody who comes back from England tells us that conditions in England are pretty drab and that the people in general are a rather sorry lot, even though they do get all these

social services. Now, how do you explain that?

MCNEIL: Well, I'd just say they're bad reporters! They don't look at the facts, they don't look at the figures! Do you think I'm drab? Do you think any of the people we bring across here are drab?

SPIVAK: Forgive me for saying so, Mr. McNeil, but you're in America — though I don't see any reason why you should be drab.

MCNEIL: Well, I've only been in America a few months.

SPIVAK: It works fast, you know!

MCNEIL: Not that fast! Let me put this to you, Mr. Spivak. Let anyone contrast our country, with 3 million unemployed, with no hope in their hearts, with anxiety in every sentence, with just nobody's business going well — remember those days and tell me that the people of Britain today are drab. It's utter, fantastic nonsense.

SPIVAK: Well, Mr. McNeil, do you think that employment is the only issue — I mean, the people in all our jails here are completely and fully employed, but they're a very unhappy lot and they haven't got a high standard of living. Is unemployment the only test?

MCNEIL: Happily, Mr. Spivak, I haven't been in your jails! But I'm not talking about the jails. I'm talking about the people — the

working people — the middle-class people of our country, who know that as long as they do a job they'll have a wage and a salary next week and next month. And believe me, coming from these people, knowing these people, I know there's nothing so miserable, so devastating, so ignoble, so humiliating, as unemployment — continuous, dreadful, bad, black-barrel unemployment.

NEVILLE: Mr. Minister, many people in this country feel that the British aren't working hard enough. It's a widespread feeling, and I wonder if you'd care to comment on that.

MCNEIL: Our people are working, on the average, a good week — 47 hours. And our people — let me just offer this figure again — have their exports up by 40 per cent as against 1938. Their agricultural quota is up by 25 per cent as against 1938. Their index of production is higher than any other nation in Europe which has been at war. And that's not bad.

NEVILLE: On this question of whether or not the British are working hard, your own government is continually exhorting the working population to increase its output.

MCNEIL: Well, that's true.

NEVILLE: And to work harder.

MCNEIL: To work harder — but why? Because our government in honesty has said to the people, "We

can't extend our social services, we can't achieve solvency, we can't attempt to pay back our debts, unless we increase our production."

FRY: Well, sir, is it true to say that the whole policy of the Labour government is a long-term policy — a policy of trying to build up a new generation in England?

MCNEIL: Yes, I think we're building for the future. We are building because we have great confidence in Britain, in the young fellows and the young women that your American boys met with. These are the chaps that we put our money on, and I make no qualification or reservation in saying that as long as they are for Britain, Britain will be better than she's ever been.

SPIVAK: Mr. McNeil, don't you think it's a mistake to spend so much time and energy on the future that there's little fun in the present?

MCNEIL: I really must deal with you, Mr. Spivak! You'd better come across here! You sound as if we were a drab people — that is what's worrying you. Look here — my little town of Greenock — 100,000 — has got a theatre of its own. In Aberdeen, in Dundee, in Greenock, in Paisley, we've since the war built up our own people's theatres. Come to the Edinburgh Festival if you've got some dollars to spare. And don't assume that because our

people are on rations for reasons that they quite well understand that they are drab. And let me say this while I'm here — when you get an Englishman in the United States telling you what a washout Britain is, wash *him* out — he's no good at all.

SPIVAK: Mr. Churchill says that you're rapidly becoming a slave State. What about him?

MCNEIL: Well, he's a bad prophet. I remember that he prophesied in 1945 that we'd have a Gestapo if we had a Labour government. But he's a grand fellow, and he's a good Briton, and when he comes to New York or goes to Massachusetts, he doesn't talk down Britain.

SPIVAK: What do you think you're going to do in the UN on the Chinese situation? Do you think there's much chance that the British government is going to recognize the Chinese Communist government?

MCNEIL: My government will be anxious to retain good relations, traditionally good relations with the Chinese people. And my government is anxious to see the Chinese people relieved from the strains they've suffered from civil war. But we'll see how this alternative government in China behaves, and then we'll make up our minds.

SPIVAK: From your past experience with Communist governments, is

there any question in your mind how the Chinese Communist government is going to act?

MCNEIL: No, I don't see any reason to conclude that the Chinese government will deviate very much from the path of the Communist governments all over Europe. But even Communist governments apparently deviate — there's a place called Belgrade in which we're all very interested.

LIMPUS: What do you think of the UN's future?

MCNEIL: My view — and it was my view in London in '45 when we first discussed this — was that the UN was in great danger of overreaching itself, that we shouldn't have had a great platter of subjects we were going to tackle, that we should have tried to tackle only the subjects upon which we had the personnel and the information. But of course, to be fair, the United Nations has had many successes.

DAVIS: Socialized medicine was one of your prime efforts. Now, how do you think that's working out? It's already costing you 200 million more than you expected, isn't it?

MCNEIL: And do you always conclude, Mr. Davis, that if the price is higher than you expected, that the goods are naturally bad?

SPIVAK: I'm sorry to interrupt, Mr. McNeil — our time is up.

THE SUMMER OF THE INSISTENT VOICES

A STORY

BY JOHN BELL CLAYTON

ALLAN could hear his mother and grandmother talking down on the front verandah. His mother had been deaf since childhood and his grandmother was speaking in a special clear decisive tone which his mother was always able to hear. His grandmother was giving the official family version of the battle of Monocacy Junction, in the War Between the States, which had been related by her uncle who had played a part in the battle as a brigadier general of cavalry.

His grandmother spoke in the decisive, irreconcilable tone.

"—I don't say Jubal Early wasn't a great general who brought credit to the Confederacy but I do say there was *some* reason he would never give Uncle Harrison a free hand. When Uncle led his men across the river there —"

They sat side by side in the rose-back rockers, knitting in unison, the needles clicking faintly, a barely perceptible squeak in the runners of both chairs. As the twilight faded

and the evening wore on they would draw their shawls about them and talk of other deeds of his ancestors — some witnessed, some guessed at, all exaggerated now to proportions of nobility. It seemed to him that the conversation about ancestors was as much a part of the old Colonial-type house as the white two-story columns or the wide double verandahs. It went through their lives like an echo in reverse, which, instead of growing fainter and fainter, thrived on and grew stronger with each repetition until at length it was the echo and not the original deed that had form and reality. Often it disturbed him strangely; sometimes listening to it filled him with such acute restlessness he had to get up and walk away from the sight of the house, which itself, at those times, seemed a relic of a lost era.

He was in his room, before the mirror of the dark cherry dresser that had been in fashion a half-century ago, putting on a clean white shirt and

JOHN BELL CLAYTON, a former reporter and publicity man, won first prize in the 1947 O. Henry awards. His story, "Smart as a Pony," appeared in the November 1948 *MERCURY*.

whistling softly to himself. It was toward the very end of summer. In the last twilight he could see splashes of yellow and here and there a premature touch of crimson on the leaves of the old maple tree outside his window in the broad yard. Within a few weeks he was supposed to enter the Colonial Springs Business College and learn to be a bookkeeper. A four-year education for him at Cavalier University was just beyond his mother's means.

He continued whistling softly. When you are young — he had just turned seventeen — certain tender songs have a way of fastening themselves upon your mind and your heart. They come to you gently . . . like the fragrance of honeysuckle or that of the old climbing rose which spread over most of the west wall of the house.

Such a song had come to him that summer. It was called *Tender Is My Love* and he thought it a beautiful song. It was a gentle thing — to be whistled or sung by those in love. He had gone about the village humming or whistling the tune. Sometimes he went down along the creek under the sycamores or wandered around alone over the hills whistling, as if he had no connection — or sought to have no connection — with the rest of life.

It had been a peculiar summer.

Boyhood ending, manhood trying to begin, neither being done graciously — he had become aware of his great nebulous wants and contradictions. There had been the attempts at dreamy detachment when, perhaps sitting in the cool parlor with a book in his hand, he was conscious of a deep affection for the house itself and of the peculiar intimate call of ancestry; so that at these times he viewed the irony of living on the verge of indigence in the oldest and largest house in the village not with anger but with a strange fierce pride. And then again he might have a quick alarming impression of the house as a frail protective shell against the crush of present-day life and of himself as a crippled and bewildered being floundering within the shell first in this direction and then in that. And there were his wants. Sometimes at night in bed he lay flat on his back, his body in rigid extension, his arms doubled back and his fingers clutching the metal rods of the head-piece in throbbing resistance of the demands that welled up from the unexplored depths of his being like the entreaties of a thousand infants deserted in the bowels of a cavern. . . .

II

Standing before the mirror, he heard Aletha open the door of the room which she and her mother rented in

his home. She came down the long musty hallway with her strange, disturbing, infant-like step. She always walked as if she were a poor-relation child come to visit and enjoy the sound of her own step in the manor house.

Abruptly he quit whistling. She paused just outside the open door of his room. A quick tightening went through his body. He would not look at her. She would be standing there like an ugly plaintive midget, her curious frustrated eyes fastened on his face. She must have been twenty-five years old and was little more than four feet tall. Her face was diminutive, her teeth crooked, her feet and hands the pitiful feet and hands of a doll.

"Are you goin' somewhere?" Aletha asked.

Her voice was like that of a child who would experiment desperately with coquetry for awhile before discarding that also as a means of ever finding happiness.

"Nowhere special," he said.

He knew the lie was obvious. He was getting ready to go down the road to see Mary Frances. He had been whistling in quiet adoration of Mary Frances. When he thought of the beauty of her deep blue eyes and the delicate whiteness of her flesh above the low throat line of her dress he found it hard to talk. In her presence, and there only, there was

no duality in his nature; he felt himself in accord with a destiny. It was something, he thought, Aletha could know nothing about, would know nothing about as long as she lived.

"What've you got on your good suit for?" Aletha persisted. Her lips would be drawn in a feeble, reproachful grin against the crooked teeth.

"I just felt like dressin' up," he said.

He had to control his face to keep it from twisting in impatience and his voice to keep it from bursting out in annoyance.

She hung there upon the heavy banisters — her eyes scrutinizing his face — while he finished brushing his hair and put on his tie and carefully tied it.

"I've got a surprise for you," she said coyly.

"Yeah?" he asked absently. "What kind of a surprise?"

"Just a surprise," she said. "You come down into the parlor and I'll let you hear it."

"I haven't got time for any surprise — I'm goin' somewhere."

"I thought you said you weren't goin' anywhere."

"I've changed my mind," he said impatiently.

"All right, I'll keep it until you come back," Aletha said.

She went down the stairs and into the parlor and to the upright piano.

She began playing and singing *La Paloma*. Her little midget fingers stumbled around over the keys and she sang in a quavery, squeaky voice.

He closed the door of his room. He could not stand her playing and singing.

He shined his shoes with a handkerchief, slipped on his coat and went down the stairs and out of the house.

"—I never trusted that woman," his grandmother was saying to his mother. "I warned your Cousin Josie at the time, when he first brought that woman into the house as a nurse for the children. A nurse! Hah! —"

They had moved for the time being down to another generation.

He went out through the yard and started down the road. Aletha quit playing *La Paloma* and he knew she was standing at the window watching after him in the twilight. He passed the nondescript clapboard house in which Aletha had formerly lived with her father and mother. He used to walk past their house on his way to and from school. The blinds were always drawn. The family — the old man, who was of normal size and worked as a field hand for Miss Addie Gordon, and the dwarfed mother and daughter — lived in the house behind the drawn blinds, as if they feared injury or ridicule. He used to hear an organ being played as

he went by. It was Aletha playing hymns and trying to sing them in her pitiful quavery voice.

He would be walking down the road and as he neared the house he would hear Aletha pumping the frightful organ and singing such hymns as *Rock of Ages* and *I Walk in the Garden with Him*. Then one day as he approached the house he saw the movement of a window shade and he realized Aletha had been peering at him from beneath the shade and he understood that she peered at him each time he walked up or down the road and ran to the organ to play and sing just as he came along in front of the house.

One of the hideous memories of his life concerned a morning of the winter before when snow was on the ground. He awoke that morning and heard a screaming. He lay in bed for some moments listening to the screaming. He got up and went out on the small upper porch that was next to his room. Aletha and her mother were out in their yard in their white nightgowns. The mother was jumping up and down in the snow shrieking. Aletha was screaming also, but she stood still; her fists were clenched and out-held and her arms were jumping up and down convulsively as if she were clutching some electric shaking device. The mother was jumping up and down in the deep snow

and Aletha was standing there with her arms shaking convulsively and both were shrieking. Mr. Rohrer the garageman came hurrying down the road.

"Papa's dead! Papa's dead!" they kept shrieking.

There was a sort of extra-terrible quality to their grief, as if they feared people would think they had sat in their kitchen and devised some macabre game and were now out in the snow in their absurd nightgowns playing it. It almost seemed to Allan that they were shrieking: "We are not ugly little dolls! We feel and suffer! You must come into our world and respect and understand our grief!"

Mr. Rohrer tried to get them back into their house. They would not go. Allan watched them come across the road to his house. His mother had them come in. Then he could hear them in the parlor crying and moaning. Once in a while one of them shrieked wildly.

The women could not bear to go back to the empty home even after the funeral. His mother let them have one of the upstairs front rooms and a cookstove was placed in it and they stayed on there for months while an effort was made to sell their home. And his mother, though she would not have mentioned it, found the money from the rent very convenient.

He never saw or thought of Aletha without a feeling of utter wretchedness. He resented her intrusion in his home. She brought into his life the constant reminder of ugliness and deformity and the memory of death and grief. Did he hate *her*? Could he hate anyone so harmless and defenseless? Could he be so base? Did he hate her for a still deeper reason? — a reason so ugly he could not begin to entertain it? He did not want to hate her. He wanted to hate no one. But he did not want the reminder of deformity and grief. He wanted, at times, at least he *supposed* he wanted, to study to become a bookkeeper and eventually to rise to the presidency of a large corporation. At other times he wanted merely to go through life whistling a tender song in quiet detachment. It was the summer when he heard for the first time — often incredulously and sometimes with a peculiar fear — the desperately insistent voices. . . .

III

"It's like I'm a lot of people at one time," he said, speaking with great earnestness, probing himself, after a remote thing. "I don't know exactly how I feel. When I'm around you I feel, well — pure."

Mary Frances gave a brief, faintly chiding laugh.

"Don't laugh about it," he said

with the same imploring, probing earnestness. "I mean I guess I could go ahead and be a bookkeeper and keep on till I got to be the head of a pretty big corporation or something like that. But a lot of the time I don't want to be that at all. I think I'd like to be a poet."

Once, indeed, he had written a poem. "Gentle people should walk down the ages together" was the only line he could now remember from it and he was not sure what that meant.

They sat in the porch swing in the shadow behind the honeysuckle vine. It was a fairly warm evening without a breeze to stir the poplar leaves in the yard. There were still blossoms on the honeysuckle vine and they gave off a fragrance that merged with a delicate perfume Mary Frances was wearing. The old brick house itself, sitting back in a yard almost as large as his own, seemed to extravasate a certain mellowness into the night.

He went on talking with a kind of inchoate fluency, always losing his natural restraint in her presence. He was at the same time elated and composed. For the moment it was as if he were in the place he should like to remain for the rest of his life; but no matter where he might have to go in the world he would be competent to any situation that might arise because the situation would be on a

lofty scale and would draw out a nobility that lay somewhere within him.

The moon came up from behind the Baylor hill to the east of the village as they sat in the swing. A fringe of oak trees on the crest of the hill stood momentarily illuminated in a molten glow, as if about to burst into flame against the hot orange globe, and near him, for him to study in adulation (before the moon turned gradually to a pale yellow as it climbed solemnly up and over the village), was the sharp silhouette of Mary Frances' profile with the mass of soft light hair, the rather large brow, the slightly upturned nose and the full rich lips.

Mary Frances permitted herself to be drawn close against him. He touched her hair with his lips. He began softly kissing her white throat. He could hear her breath coming and going in a low musical murmur. She was then soft, yielding and vibrant.

Mary Frances was nineteen. She was a student at the girls' college in Colonial Springs. In her presence, he felt honestly and deeply as if he were fulfilling a destiny, as if the two of them, remnants of the two oldest families in the community, must join hands and walk down the ages together, mystically reuniting a near-lost thing. She would lean back with

lips parted and eyes closed as he read (from the volume of *The World's Best Poetry* in the parlor) love sonnets which neither quite understood. Or she would listen in apparent full sympathy and understanding as he tried to speak of his slowly forming and contradictory longings. And then there were times when she seemed to be struggling with contradictions of her own; after permitting a caress behind the honeysuckle she might suddenly and rather meanly taunt him with the name of a movie star or All-American football player she had never met and would never meet or a radio crooner or a jet-plane pilot from whom she was and would forever remain equally distant, as if she hated within his nature a certain something almost impossible to define . . . a gentleness verging on effeminacy — true not only of him but all his kind — a thin and fading vestige that grows soft and destructive unless now and then able to replenish and strengthen itself in the test of great events such as war.

Now a tremendous gentleness went over him; it was as if he had gained maturity in an instant. All life had a subtle glory to it that he was detecting for the first time at that moment. There was a peculiar nobility about everything — nature, the quiet obscure village in the moonlight, men, women, life — that only poetry could

capture. A thing of inexpressible grandeur was about to begin.

His contradictions, he believed, had resolved themselves as if by magic; his thoughts took on order and a startling lucidity. It seemed to him, as he held Mary Frances in the spell of the evening, that he saw — with astonishing clarity — that beauty and truth and nobility of feeling are the inseparable trinity and can be expressed only in poetry or great music. He felt he would be not a bookkeeper but a composer.

IV

"You shouldn't kiss me that way," Mary Frances murmured at last. She said it quite without conviction, as if following a faint necessity to repeat something of the kind one last time before giving herself completely to the mood that was like a symphony.

"Mary Frances, I want to marry you," he said. "I want to write songs about you."

He was aware then that a car had drawn up at the front gate and someone was gently tapping the horn. Mary Frances straightened herself with quick decorum and in a high, unnatural voice called out, "Oh, there's Max! Come on in, Max!"

It was a fellow named Max Adams. He lived up in the village. His father was a lawyer who drove back and forth to Colonial Springs every day.

Max was in his late twenties and was an instructor of physical education in a small college in the Shenandoah Valley. He was home for the summer and soon would be going back to the college. He was a big blond with a good-natured smile. He was not in love with Mary Frances and had merely dropped by as he might have called on any other girl in the village.

Max sauntered up the flagstone walk under the tall Lombardy poplar and sat down on the porch with his legs draped down the steps. He had been playing tennis earlier and wore a sweatshirt and sneakers.

The rays of the moon still fell upon the porch but an enchantment had ended.

All at once Allan wanted to be alone. He did not know why; he felt it necessary to be alone to find out why he wanted to be alone. He abruptly excused himself and went through the house to the kitchen and drew a glass of water. He stood for a few moments at the kitchen window with the glass in his hand looking out toward, and barely seeing, a double row of aspen trees winding up a lane in front of a neighboring house. "Mary Frances," he said desperately under his breath, "don't let's forget times like that! Please, let's never let anything make us deny the nobility of love and life!"

He went back out on the porch. Max was sitting in the swing with Mary Frances. His left arm was lying on the back of the seat.

"Mind if an old man sits beside your girl?" Max said casually.

Allan sat down on the porch where Max had been sitting. He had a sense that something was happening. He did not know what it was. Max and Mary Frances had begun a silly chattering banter that excluded him and was hateful to him. A deep perverseness and a blazing hatred of Max Adams ran through him. He hated Max Adams because he was twenty-five years old, because he was not a Virginian, not even a Southerner. His people had come from Ohio. Allan hated his pleasantness and casualness that spread like marmalade over everything that came before it. He hated him because his casual intrusion was the signal and reminder that all things — all feelings and passions — must return to the commonplace, as if following a geometrical chart and pattern, and every affirmation must have its denial.

The excluding banter went on in the swing. Mary Frances' voice rose shrill. She told Max how good-looking he was . . . how much he looked like a certain movie star . . . how irresistible to all the girls. And Allan knew that her words were directed partly at *him* — at that certain in-

definable quality he lacked and which he supposed Ohians had naturally.

"Why Mary Frances," Max said with mock chiding, "you know you're the only girl in my life. Will you marry me, Mary Frances?"

Her laughter was sudden, nervous, unreal. "— The second — the second proposal in one evening," she pealed out. "Allan wants me to marry him too — he wants to write songs about me — don't you, Allan? Would you write songs about me, Max?"

He sat leaning against the pillar, sickness and outrage creeping over him. He was hearing her words and he was thinking, "Just a few moments ago there was a fineness about us. I thought people like us should walk down the ages together."

He wanted to shout the words to the world so they would never be lost. He felt now that one was never allowed to love fully and directly or to feel fully and directly. One must never live deeply. It must be a secret and devious thing, a thing to be ashamed of, and if ever indulged in must immediately be denied.

He arose, trying weakly to smile. Max turned toward him then and soberly asked if he had ever thought about going to Old Dominion College or Cavalier University. He shook his head, the feeble smile still there; he felt inane, sick.

It is not a crime to be seventeen,

he thought. It is not a crime to love with all your being. It is not a crime to be confused. It is not a crime to be the descendant of a fading aristocracy. It is not a crime to need.

"I'd like to see you go," Max said. "I'd like to talk it over with you. Maybe I could help you get a scholarship that would take care of some of the expense."

And wash dishes or wait on table for the rest of it, he thought. My great-grandfather owned the very land on which Old Dominion College stands.

He could only shake his head mutely. He wanted no help. He wanted nothing of that nature. His chest was tight, his throat closed. He wanted to do wild, desperate things — drink, take dope, jump from parachutes, rob a bank, go off to a foreign country and disappear.

"Do you feel all right, Allan?" Mary Frances asked with a note of concern.

"Kinda got a sick headache," he said. "I'm goin' home."

I have committed only the crime of being seventeen, he thought — only the crime of exposing myself to betrayal and not knowing how to conduct myself after the act. I have committed only the crime of being defenseless.

Without a word he went down the steps and started toward the gate.

"Don't you want some aspirin,

Allan?" Mary Frances called out, extending her invitation for him to stay.

"No thanks," he said.

"Hey, Allan!" Max called. "Wait, I'll take you home."

"No thanks," he said again.

After that there was complete silence on the porch. He knew they would discuss him. Max would think he was leaving because of jealousy. Mary Frances would say he was just peculiar that way at times. Perhaps she was right. He did not know. It seemed to him he knew nothing. He felt without a shred of dignity.

He went on up the moonlit road, past the school, past Aletha's home, to his own yard.

v

His mother and grandmother were still sitting on the verandah. He did not stop. He went into the house and into the parlor. He lay down on the divan.

He lay with his eyes open for awhile. He was looking at a big dark red rose in a small blue vase on a table across the room. He closed his eyes. He put his forearm across his brow. He did not want to look at anything.

The odor of honeysuckle from the vine on the side porch came to him. It was sweetish and sickening.

His grandmother was telling his mother of an incident that happened in the life of her father, his great-

grandfather, before the War Between the States — the only war that was ever discussed with any interest in their house. There was always this talk of people who long ago had lived their lives and by that mere fact had achieved a greatness. It seemed they were speaking of people who from childhood had found their place in life and had known and done what they wanted to do or were supposed to do. He did not want to hear it. He wished that he could not hear a human voice. Here he was at seventeen and he did not know what he wanted to do — or how one even went about living.

He heard footsteps in the room. He did not open his eyes. He knew it was Aletha. He heard her cross the room. He heard her crazy little voice.

"Keep your eyes shut," she said coyly. "I've got a surprise for *you*."

He heard her go to the upright piano and twist the seat of the stool up as far as it would go. He heard her climb up on the stool and place a piece of sheet music on the piano. He heard her open the lid of the piano. He heard her clear her throat a little. He had the picture of her sitting there on the piano stool, ineffective hands poised, ready to play, the sheet of music open before her. He knew her little eyes would be shining.

She started singing now. He heard her thin quavering voice.

"—Tend-er is my love — so tend-er is my love for you —"

He opened his eyes and looked at her. She was glancing first at the sheet of music and then at him.

"Alike!" he thought. "Oh God! Like twins! The way she looks and the way I am!"

A book was open on the table near the head of the divan. He grabbed it without a full realization that it was his grandmother's Bible. He drew back his arm and threw it at her as hard as he could throw. It hit her on the side of her neck.

"Damn you!" he said. "Damn your awful ugly little face!"

He had no control over his words. They hardly seemed to be his own. He could not hold them back.

"I wish you were in hell!" he cried.

Her frustrated little eyes batted at him in shock for a moment and then she threw her hands to her face and began to cry. She slipped down off the stool and started to run from the room. Then she turned and went back to the piano and snatched up the piece of sheet music and tore it with savage rips. She spun around and faced him, her face twisted, her

fists clenched, her arms jumping up and down and her whole upper body shaking in convulsion. And his own body became rigid and he knew that if she came closer or uttered a single word he would kick her in the stomach with all the viciousness within him.

She ran from the room, her arms still shaking convulsively, and he was left alone.

He heard his grandmother say from the porch, "Allan! You come out here!"

He jumped up from the divan and slipped out through the kitchen, the yard, the garden, Stuart's cornfield, and finally climbed the far fence of the cornfield and went on up the hill to the top. There he stood in violent, sick trembling. A light was on up at the Presbyterian manse. There were also lights in the homes of Doctor Gilbert and Viceroy Baines the undertaker and in other homes in the neat and trim little village lying below him on the floor of the quiet valley. He wanted so badly to hold someone in his arms and he wondered now whom it should be; he wanted so badly to embrace a belief and he wondered now what it might be.



PORTRAIT OF AN EX-LIFER

ANONYMOUS

THE prison was hideous, even from the outside: squat, drab, bleak and dirty: an ancient, corrosive etching on the heart of civilization. A hundred years ago, prisons were built to destroy the human personality. They look it. The same thing is accomplished by our modern prisons, though the setting is more artistic. The destruction goes on continuously, garnished with a few murders, a dozen suicides, several riots, stains of blood, and fifteen hundred tight-lipped and hard-eyed, loose-chinned and shifty-eyed, grinning or scowling, or just frozen faces.

Now the iron door slammed to push me out. It slammed with a crash as though angry with me. Maybe it was. I had lived there long enough to become part of the masonry.

Twenty-two years had passed since my feet had dragged me into the Death House. A half dozen shocking barbecue sessions in that smelly abattoir had conditioned me to accept numbly anything that might be in

store for me. My death sentence had finally been commuted to life imprisonment. Many things had been in store. I wrote about some of them in "Portrait of a Lifer," published in the MERCURY some years ago.

Now, standing on the sidewalk, gripped by uncertainty and bewilderment, I couldn't think what to do. I walked over and sat down by the wall. And there I could understand a frightened horse's running back into a burning barn, birds flying into stone walls. I could understand almost anything except that I had been put out, evicted, dispossessed. It felt more like any of those than the magical word "pardoned."

It was wonderful, but there was something wrong about it. They had taken me out of a quiet cell and pushed me into something that was too wide-spaced, too glittering, and altogether too damned noisy. I had struggled up through a stagnant pool, only to crack my head against the hard floor of a world that awed me.

THE AUTHOR of this article was condemned to death some years ago. Later, his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, and eventually he was paroled. This autobiographical sketch brings up to date his "Portrait of a Lifer," which appeared in the February 1936 MERCURY.

A tower guard waved to me. My arm was slow in returning the greeting. He said, "Take care of yourself." For years I had looked up at him and, remembering some of his brutalities, I had said, "You bastard!" Now he didn't matter. He was left with the cesspool; I was out of it. I lit a cigarette, spat against the wall, and walked away.

I wanted a steak, a woman and a tall glass of cold beer. The warden must have known, that: another guard came along and said, "The station is down here." He hung around until the train left.

Where to go was a problem. My brother's home seemed convenient. I walked in on him without warning. He was glad to see me. "Fine to have you here. You're welcome. I know it will take a few days for you to find a room . . ." We had dinner. I couldn't eat. Everything was wrong: the white table cloth, the delicate dishes, the small talk of a family at table. It was too slow-paced, too nice. One had to rush, to snatch and grab and shove it down the throat before the screw growled the command to rise and shuffle out. So I shuffled out.

I walked around the streets, around in the strange darkness that was all about me. Never, during all my prison years, had I been outside a building after dark. A traffic corner fascinated me. It was amazing to see

autos speed along, then stop when the light changed. I walked across and back several times. The girls came by wearing pants. I had never seen a girl with pants on — I mean they had always worn dresses. I gaped at their strutting and switching, but I couldn't figure a way to get acquainted. I went home and went to bed. The room was too dark. There had always been a corridor light before my cell. I missed the night noises of the cell house: the grunts and groans and snores, the frequent sigh, the soft voice of the lad that murmured, "Helen, Helen, Helen," night after night. He had killed Helen, many years before; it was accidental, he claimed. He told me she spoke to him every night as he slept. I missed the pat-pat of the night keeper's feet as he made his ghostly rounds every half hour. I missed the nearness of the friends that had gone through much of the storm with me. I missed the "atmosphere" that had seeped into my veins and become part of me. I sat by a window and smoked until dawn.

II

Some days later, my brother introduced me as a friend to one of his co-workers. I realized how difficult it would be to explain a brother that had been unknown for a couple of decades. I packed up.

In prison I had written some stories and articles. Through their publication, acquaintances had come my way. I went to see some of them in search of a job.

"Oh, you'll get a job easy . . . A man with your ability should have no trouble . . . I'll try to get in touch with some one . . . You see, our work is so different from what you have done . . ." I went to strangers, shops, factories, offices. "References? Last place of employment?" The United States Employment Bureau found me a job in a hospital. It was lower than the usual run of low jobs for vagabonds and drifters, but it was a job. In a month the police were there. "Just a routine check-up. Don't let it worry you." But the detective had asked for me under my prison alias. When he described me, the result was disastrous and swift. "Here under an assumed name . . . a criminal!" I overheard the nurses discussing it. I left.

There was a tavern where I had noticed considerable "traffic." I went in and found a dim corner and ordered a beer. A throaty voice came over my shoulder. "How about a drink, Big Boy?" The waiter brought it and I looked her over. I hadn't noticed the "Quest-shon" ads and knew little about making mountains out of mole hills. She had a nice smile, too. "This stuff is lousy," she

said. "I've got better home. Care to try it?" I cared.

A particular type of brazenness had always been embarrassing. The way she flung off things jolted me; the way she dwindled from buxom to bony amazed me. A cruiser, veteran of many wars. A couple of empty shot bags dangled from the yardarms. I tossed a couple of dollars on the table, jammed on my hat and walked out. This wasn't what I had dreamed about and ached for through all the prison years. But the question arose, What the hell did you expect?

The bewilderment of the strange, dazzling world into which I had been thrust was diminished a bit. I began to realize that if one received service, remuneration was expected. The analogy was in my mind: I'd give all the service I could; I wanted remuneration for value given. Nor did I over-evaluate my abilities.

Someone directed me to a gentleman whose statements had led to the assumption that he would place me. I told him of work I had done for a dozen years in prison, of a course I had taken, of the countless hours of practice.

"Yes, but there are valuable materials used in that profession. Whom could you expect to trust you right off the bat?" He was right. Who knew me or what was in my mind? I also thought, Who wanted to know me?

When I came into such situations, I often found myself inclined to adopt a sarcastic attitude. I suppose it was because I was finding the world I had dreamed about to be almost as tough a problem as my first attempt at prison adjustment.

The gentleman, before whose desk I now sat, was making \$50,000 deals by telephone. I waited for a pause. "Do you think you might know someone that would trust me with a broom?" I asked. "I think I could do porter's work." He appeared amazed, unbelieving. "Would you work as a porter?" By the tone of his voice and his expression, I felt he thought I was either a tramp without ambition or a liar. "I'll work at any damned thing I can do, so long as there is no ceiling put over my head. If I show ability for something better, along with dependability, I expect promotion." He offered me a \$25-a-week porter's job with no promise of advancement. I walked out.

From time to time, there had been chance meetings with other ex-inmates. Invariably, experiences and conclusions were the same. "I've got a job. It doesn't amount to much but if I can get ahead in it, I'll be satisfied." The natural rejoinder was, "And if you can't get ahead?" A hardening of the mouth was sufficient answer.

I met an old friend. He has been

tried and acquitted on several homicide charges. He had been "away" for safe-robbery, assaulting an officer. His hand shot out to me as quickly as any hand I had ever shaken. "I'm glad you're out, old boy. Now, let me tell you something. It's a different world. You can't get away with crooked stuff any more, so stay on the level. Be like me. I've got a nice little horse-book. Tell you what: I'll put you in a spot where you can handle play for me. I'll give you seventy-five a week and commission. When you get some dough laid away, we'll see about getting you a place of your own." I said I'd love it but the parole officer might not quite follow his reasoning. "Yeh, I know," he said. "They're a narrow-minded bunch. Well, here's some dough. If you need more, let me know, but for Christ's sake don't get into trouble!" He handed me a hundred dollars. Big Bill's heart was always good.

III

I went after other jobs. Finally I landed one as an oiler on a tugboat. Cabin, means, and a fair wage. It looked like a good spot. I was in the world, yet aside from it. I'd get after my writing — there were a couple of novels to be rewritten . . .

The time came for my monthly report. My parole officer was as fair as possible. "I know you will be moving

around. Pick your most convenient time to appear here but it must be during the third week."

There was no convenient time that week except at night. We were up and down the coast with hardly a stop. On Friday afternoon, I told the engineer I had to take care of a business matter.

"You're off Sunday. Take care of it then."

"It can't wait until Sunday."

"Neither can this boat. Get down to the engine. We're taking an oil barge to Bayway."

I packed my grip and got to the wharf just in time.

That was a mistake. Parole conditions are stringent, but there is sufficient flexibility to condone the unavoidable. Had I failed to make that report, I would not have been returned to prison. I had acted too hastily. But there it was, and again I went looking for a job.

The late Lewis E. Lawes, an old ex-host of mine, was still active at that time. I went to see him. Many times, I had played in his home with the prison orchestra, and he remembered me.

"A man I know has an idea for a radio show using a lie detector," he told me. "If the detector shows you intend to make good, this fellow says that an industrialist, who will be present, will give you a good job."

"So long as it's anonymous, you've got the right man," I said.

We did the show. The detector showed me to be, at that particular moment, the type of man people like to believe George Washington was — or else the analyst cheated a little in my favor. The "industrialist" was impressed. But the next day, he turned out to be a well meaning labor organizer who could only place me in a job requiring a broad back. It was also necessary that I suppress my past and drop my age to forty. When I explained about the parole officer's duty to visit my place of employment, etc., I found that neither he nor Mr. Lawes had fully understood the proposition made to me by the producer. Nor had the producer understood the offer of the "industrialist." I went away from there.

O. Henry could have handled an incident that occurred about that time. In the house where I roomed, there was a young lady roomer. I dropped into a seat next to her at the corner coffee shop. We became friends. A couple of times a week, we went to a movie and had a soda or coffee. She was a wonderful woman: not talkative, never inquisitive, neat, clean, agreeable. But the more I was with her, the more I became afraid.

I awakened at night, wondering how hurt she would be when she learned of my record. I began avoid-

ing her. A couple of weeks later, her room was vacant, and I found the landlady being curt and brusque with me.

"What happened?" I asked. She drew herself up like an angry harri-dan. "What happened, indeed! Why did you break off with her?" I didn't know what to say. I hadn't thought our friendship had even been noticed. I made some lame excuse about her stopping our movie trips.

She snapped at me. "You stopped! She told me herself. You're another of those holier-than-thou, self-right-eous men. I'll bet if all your past life was known, you wouldn't be so high and mighty, and that goes for the loose-tongued busy-body that told you she had made one mistake in her life!"

I could have soaked my head in concrete. I would have broken an arm rather than hurt that woman. There was no trace of her. It hurt.

I found myself venting my spleen on others. Waitresses, conductors, hard-working people with a hatful of their own headaches were aware of my discourtesy. I disliked people. When I thought about it, I disliked myself for disliking them. Building up inside of me was the same old mountain of dissatisfaction and inability to cope with life that had previously brought disaster. But now I knew that somehow I must be suffi-

ciently intelligent and level-headed to avoid pitfalls.

Another Help Wanted ad attracted me. I went to the factory and walked into the wrong office. It was a Friday morning. Two women and a man were making up the payroll. Money was stacked on a desk between them. I excused myself.

What a set-up for a soft touch! Three people would be a pushover. The door had a convenient loop handle on the outside. A piece of broomstick shoved through it would hold everybody in until a man was out and gone.

I went out and sat across the street. The employees came out for lunch. Three hundred, at least, I mused. The average wage could be fifty dollars . . . fifteen grand. How many problems that would solve! I could open a business. If something went wrong . . . well, that old prison bed had been straw but it had become comfortable. The cell had been quiet and peaceful. There had been some strife and contention, but there was just as much out here. The food had even been fair at times . . . Bill and George and Duke, Al and Rip and Piggy and Bugsey, had been fellows one would be glad to meet any place, any time. Some of us had played handball together, some had shared buckets of prison home brew . . . If I went after this payroll and missed

... I wondered if I were missing something that I had left or lost in prison. During the short months of freedom, I had been vaguely conscious of a void in my life. There was a constant impulse to look right and left, to see what the others were doing, to listen for an order that would tell me to get up, to eat, to go to the shop, leave the shop, raise my hand for permission to visit the latrine, raise it for permission to speak, go to my room and make sure the lock slammed so the tier runner could snap on the long iron brake or bolt that runs across the tops of the doors, the entire length of the tier. I sat and thought about these things and realized that the transition hadn't been complete. I wasn't entirely free, some of my thoughts and reactions were chained to an invisible chrysalis I had left in prison. It also occurred to me that a dominant factor in the cause of my mental turmoil might be the knowledge that I must now accept responsibility. That was part of the price of freedom. I would not be fed, clothed or put up for the night except by my own effort. Maybe that was the part of prison life I missed most. And perhaps that helped prompt the man who wrote:

My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a close communion tends
To make us what we are. Even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.

IV

I thought about the payroll, the fat factory payroll. If my decision regarding it were influenced by the prison yardstick of right and wrong, by the pattern set by every prison system I had known, there would be another bandit on the loose.

In prison, "wrong" becomes "right" when it is a matter of convenience, expediency. I once asked a warden (and believe me, I had to be there a long time to ask such a question), "Do you think it is right to lock that fellow in solitary on the word of a bootlicker who is notorious for curry-ing favor?" The incident concerned an attempted escape in which the inmate had not been involved, as was definitely proved some time later. I don't emphasize that particular injustice; they are daily occurrences in all prisons, but here is that warden's reply.

"You've been around here long enough to know that I decide what is right." And he sure was a deciding fool.

Is it right to lock people into cramped, stifling cells on hot summer evenings? Would an hour or two of fresh air defeat the purpose of prison, perhaps modify the crushing punishment? Is it right to confine a person to his cell, to an isolation wing (have you forgotten the Holmsburg sweat

box where several died of the steam treatment?), or to solitary confinement (where many suicides occur) for days, perhaps weeks, because that person was sufficiently ingenious to make a small stove on which to cook a mouthful after coming, hungry and angry from a poor, at times outrageous, meal in the messhall? You know, they don't get caught using a stove after eating a good, solid beef stew — with beef in it. Is it right to enmesh people in such rigorous discipline that every vein and muscle swells and strains in protest, until hair-trigger tempers let go and there is a fist fight, a loud cursing of a keeper, a smashing of property or some other outburst? And then to brand the exploding person as a trouble-maker and to slam him into an isolation wing? Is it right to employ savage, sadistic, moronic keepers and to teach them that the three cardinal rules of prison are, "Keep these guys inside the walls, tolerate no infraction of the rules, do not in any way become friendly or personal with them"?

Such things are considered right by most higher-ups in prison management. Most keepers or guards consider anything right if it makes their task easier — a bullet in the head instead of a command to surrender is quite all right, especially since it disposes of "a guy that didn't have the

guts to take his punishment," as one gentle gendarme remarked to me after shooting a lad off the prison wall.

After a short period of such treatment, prison types begin to emerge: the fellows who rebel constantly; those who become cunning and crafty, the type that learns to wear a mask so efficiently that the gods themselves can't tell what is in his mind; and the small, slimy, stool-pigeon type that sends in a daily snitch note about someone, usually someone he doesn't like. If he fails to see a rule violation, he manufactures one, and while he is at it, he thinks up a good one.

Of course, "wrong" in prison isn't all one-sided. For the inmate anything is right if it brings him food, drink, a moment's pleasure or amusement; if it annoys or injures a guard. Take anything you can get your hands on. It isn't stealing, it's "providing." A few eggs purloined from the kitchen or bakery are to the inmate as a ball game, a good show, an evening's diversion, are to a free man.

I've heard some eloquent arguments, *pro* and *con*, on such a thing as a prison riot. Is it right or wrong for an inmate to string along with his fellows in a riot? Remember, he knows, if he knows anything, that any difference or improvement in prison conditions, from those of a

century ago, came only through riots, smashing things, burning buildings, bloodshed.

V

And so, on and on and on it goes. Nonsense upon idiocy, idiocy upon insanity, all of it forming a pattern of living and thinking that becomes as much a part of the inmate's life as do air and water and food. Then, after five or ten or twenty or thirty years, he is expected to slip naturally and quietly and smoothly into a world where most prison thoughts and reasoning would be considered insanity if they were known.

I sat across the street from the factory and I thought about many things: prisons, payrolls, the wall, the will to tear loose the roots that still held ground inside some wall. I wondered which were stronger: a man's will or a prison wall. I had studied the wall. I knew its dark power to hold men's bodies, their minds, their hearts; to hold their hearts even after spewing their bodies into an alien world. I got up abruptly and went off to the railroad station.

It was night when the prison loomed before me. There, on the walls, were the keepers, peering like vultures into the gloomy hell which they guarded. One of them turned and looked down at me. I pulled my hat over my eyes and walked around

to the front of the place. The door was just as massive and foreboding as it had been twenty-two years ago, when an armed escort had shoved me through it. I dropped onto the lawn before the warden's house and tried to relive some moments of the prison years. I could see many things spin before me but I couldn't get down into them, become part of them. I had grown away from it all, even faster than I had become part of it. Now that long period seemed to have been a nightmare. The trees swaying softly above me wove fantastic patterns on the sombre prison buildings. And that was what prison life had been: a hellish fantasy, a fantasy that had chewed off a piece of me and still held it. Well, it could damned well keep the piece and run it around the prison yard throughout eternity. The next train out took me back to a world I wanted to know more about.

A week later, I picked up a newspaper and read a headline: "Shortage of Help May Close T. B. Wards." There wasn't any future in that type of work, but so long as I knew where that payroll lay so loosely, I had better get a grip on something and hold on to it. On their work application, I twisted and distorted my history. "Last ten years of employment?" I gave the names of those for whom I had worked in prison, but I listed

their home addresses. "References?" A couple of wardens and prison officials. Let them recommend me or down me. My health was good, so I came through the X-ray and physical tests all right. In a few days, I was in white, assigned to a ward filled with desperately ill consumptives.

The compensating feature of such work is that one has no trouble of one's own that can possibly compare with the burden borne by those who lie so precariously on the edge of the grave. In the evening, after work, I walked out into the sunshine, feeling as though I had never known the meaning of the word "trouble." I settled down, wondering how long the anchor would hold. It held for two solid, normal, peaceful, enjoyable years. Then things went wrong.

My vacation had just started. My fishing clothes and tackle were packed. The phone rang. The Medical Super-

intendent wanted me at his office that afternoon, "without fail." It sounded ominous. I checked the past two years. I hadn't deviated an inch. Maybe my past . . . ?

I sailed into his office with my fists clenched, but I cooled off when he spoke.

My work record, conduct, attendance: "We've never had better . . . I'm sorry to tell you that your recent routine X-ray shows you have contracted pulmonary tuberculosis. Of course it is a minimal case and it can be arrested . . ."

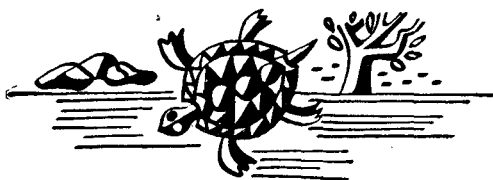
"Arrested!" It must be my middle name!

I'm sitting on the porch of a shack high in the mountains. The air is fresh and cool and clean. There is a mountain peak before me. This week I walked a quarter of a mile up its green, sloping side. Next week, I'll walk farther. Some day I'll walk right over its peak — "arrested" again.



DOWN TO EARTH

by ALAN DEVOE



THE BIOLOGY OF FREEDOM

AS HAS been pointed out often enough in "Down to Earth" discussions of animal behavior and the animal mind, there are, broadly speaking, three various views of what motivates "the lower orders." First, there is the simply anthropomorphic view that foxes and robins and rabbits have personalities virtually like our own. They wear fur or feathers; but they are to be viewed as essentially *people*, and their complicated behaviors as thought-out and planned in the way in which a man might plan them. This understanding is expressed in dozens of popular and sentimental phrases applied to animals, as for example when they are referred to as "the woods-folk." Over against this somewhat uncritical if warm-hearted view, there is set the cold concept, popular alike among many scientists and neo-Scholastic

philosophers, that man alone has rationality and freedom of the will; and that the acts of all other creatures, however intricate and purposive and ingenious they may look, are rightly to be ascribed to an astonishing automatism called *instinct*. Finally, in the third view, expounded by dyed-in-the-wool materialists and mechanists, and perennially hailed with glad cries of liberation by college sophomores, it is held that animals are indeed the will-less, irrational "prisoners of their natures," but it is insisted that so are we all.

Naturalists and philosophers are forever racking their wits over all this business. Are we free, and the animals prisoners? Are our consciousness and motivations unique; and if so, where along the biological line was man loosed from the bonds that hold a mouse to the tight groove of mouse-ness? Or are we all of us — mice and men and fleas and bears and every other life-form dancing its antical

dance on this planet — every one a puppet, an automaton, a mechanism, of which it must forever be said *non agit, sed agitur*? Back in the most ancient antiquity men were wrestling with these unmanageable problems; and they continue.

At Christmas-time, of course, the whole lot of us join together in something like a religiousness. The word "spirit," in this season, comes easily to the lips. It is in the air for all of us to be professing now (as indeed all of us do ordinarily take for granted, except when we are grimly putting words on paper to prove a contrary thesis) that our consciousness is something more than material; and we all talk cheerfully now of, for instance, men of good *will*, as though the will and its captaincy of the self were the shiningest certainty. In a religious season such as Christmas the most beetle-browed materialist may be absent-mindedly carried away — as he watches, it may be, children singing carols, or sees the light in the eyes of an old gaffer entering a church — into a quite deplorable forgetfulness of his professional disbelief in anything but the "dark heave of blood and the twitch of the nerve." Mechanists, around Christmas-time, have been known to break down into something perilously resembling almost a belief in humanity. We are souls. We are free. There is a liberty

in us, under God. That is the temper abroad as the calendar moves toward late December. Indeed, we go further, the simple and pious of us. We extend the area of spirit, of liberty, not only to all mankind but to the animals. Automata? Behavior merely instinctive? No, no. All creatures are in a brotherhood. The least of them has a spirit partaking, at least in some degree, of the Spirit that is before and above all things. There is some gift of mind in a squirrel, some gift of will, some tiny reflection of or participation in the Source that is the ground of being of us all.

So it goes, around Christmas.

It seems a suitable occasion for bringing up the work of a man of science who held steadfastly, all the year around, to exactly this concept of liberty, freedom and will as pervasive of all nature. He was a man insistent that not even the frog in the brook, not even the amoeba in a drop of brook-water, is a mere mechanism, a mere machine of instinct. It was his startling conclusion, with regard to instinct, that there simply is no such thing. No animal behaviors are rigidly fixed in instinctive patterns. Not even the migrations of birds, not even the web-spinning of spiders or the acorn-storing of squirrels, are to be considered automatic, "instinctive" acts. Fundamentally free (*i.e.*, variable) behavior is the primary and only

kind of behavior, What animals may do, however automatic or choiceless it may look, is in fact "a means of satisfaction discovered by intelligence." Or, putting it another way, even animals' most "uniform habits must be looked upon as the fixation of primarily free actions of the will, a fixation brought about by the uniformity of basic conditions." Instinct? Preformed automatism? There is none. There is only the free consciousness of each individual creature, operating, under the assistances and limitations of its special anatomy, habitat, and psychological disposition, to live its life in a true liberty, seeking pleasure, evading pain.

The man who made this attack upon the whole concept of instinct, and who insisted upon a variableness and freedom running through the entire range of behavior from men's to millipedes', was the late Dr. Johann A. Loeser. It needs to be emphasized that Dr. Loeser was in no way a crank or crackpot. He was a scholarly zoologist and psychologist in the most formidable German tradition, a University of Berlin professor. It was only after long years of animal observation and experiment that he delivered his lecture, "The Untenability of the Theory of Animal Instinct," to the Berliner Gesellschaft naturforschender Freunde in 1930. The lecture was subsequently expanded, with the aid

and counsel of a battery of other German zoologists and psychologists, into Loeser's book *Die psychologische Autonomie des organischen Handelns*.

II

It is difficult and dangerous to try to simplify such a work as Loeser's into a few paragraphs, but it is worth trying. Rejecting "instinct" as an explanation of animal behavior, Dr. Loeser was at pains, however, to condemn the error of "conceiving the animal's action in its entirety as one intelligent voluntary act." We are to consider the purposive acts of animals as analogous to human, voluntary ones; yes. But what we are to do is to break up the "composite phenomenon" — such as, say, a bird's nest-building — into a number of *small, voluntary* actions, regarding the total performance as the sum of these, not as an entirety either planned as such by the bird or as mystically wrought by the operation of an unfathomable "instinct." Does the concept become clear at all? It is not an easy one; and it is the less so for having to be rendered into English from the prickliest kind of scientific German. However . . .

"There is only one law for all animals, including man," held Loeser, "that is, the free adjustment of their actions, so far as this is practically possible, to the promptings of their

individual natures." A creature feels a sensation, say itching. It tries to remove it. Now, "the methods employed must necessarily vary in accordance with all the internal and external conditions — that is, they vary according to the particular species and even in one and the same individual. Thus a bird may peck itself with its beak, scratch itself with its claws, or remove the irritation by shaking its feathers. Its sand- or water-bath may serve the same purpose. None of these reactions is pre-formed; each of them is the outcome of *all the prevailing circumstances*." Exactly what response a creature will make is "determined by the scope and extent of consciousness and the corresponding degree of intelligence, within the physiological capacity of the individual, and within the limits imposed by external conditions. Every external action is the natural product of all these factors in question." To summarize: "*We may say that in any given situation every creature helps itself as well as it can under the aegis of the pleasure-principle.*"

Instinct? No. The free consciousness of the individual creature simply does what it can with available equipment and environment. Take chaffinches to New Zealand and they cease building the "instinctive" type of chaffinch-nest, and instead build like the New Zealand Baltimore bird.

Eagle-owls, supposed to nest "instinctively" in rock-caves, in the heavy woods of Pomerania build nests in trees. And so on and on. There are no "instincts." Dr. Loeser tested kittens and found no instinctive fear of dogs. He experimented with chicks and found no instinct to peck. Pecking has to be learned; special fears have to be learned; special loves have to be learned; ducks have to learn to swim; cats and falcons have to learn to recognize mice as prey. What every living creature starts with is simply a free consciousness, considerable or tiny, and what it proceeds to do is to learn things, to adapt itself, to cope with events, as best its native intelligence and its particular equipments (claws, beak, tail, fingers, or whatever) may allow it. Nothing is pre-formed; nothing is inborn (except in the vaguest sense, as for instance the fear of loud noise or the love of comfortable warmth). Loeser breaks down an apparently stereotyped behavior-entirety like birds' nest-building into scores of "little" intelligent acts: making a support or resting-place which will ease the sensation in the bird's hatching-spots; raising the nest-rim to give the mother a sense of enclosure and hiding-place; and so on through all the steps, each act being an act of intelligence, none of the acts being "instinctive," and the Whole of the thing being explicable

without postulating any machine-like "nest-building instinct" or, on the other hand, any larger intelligence than we may safely presume birds to possess.

Readers can stand only so much of technical exposition; and it is time to call a halt. A great deal less than justice is done to Dr. Loeser by so small and fragmentary a summary; but somehow, this Christmas, it has seemed worth while talking about him even if only so inadequately. He believed in freedom, did Dr. Loeser. Not only the free spirit of man, but a certain freedom indwelling even in a chipmunk, a certain everlasting living plasticity in the littlest of the animal-

cules. When the unfinished English translation of his work was published nine years ago, and almost immediately remaindered in the drug-stores at something like 49¢, Dr. Loeser had already been dead for nearly a year. He died in the autumn of 1939. His views may have been in part wrong. They may have been far righter than even his most enthusiastic supporters have yet grasped. But they were in any case such views — such an insistence upon freedom omnipresent — as could only ensure such an end as came to him. Dr. Loeser died a long way from the University of Berlin. He died in England, a broken man, a political refugee.

TO A STUDENT

BY JOSEPH JOEL KEITH

Let the thought be a white bird
wherever you go,
an ascendant and white word
over the snow;
let the pen be bitten
and the pure thought written.

Let the thought be a white drift,
a rolling wide sweep.
Let the word be a white gift,
reaching out, deep
as the frosty still hours
that are hiding the flowers.

OUR GROWING SELF-SUFFICIENCY

BY C. LESTER WALKER

THERE is a kind of economic parable for Americans these days in the story of a mine in Greenland and the rare and strange mineral which for years has been dug out of it. The story is especially for those who find themselves increasingly baffled by the postwar world's slow recovery, for those who catch themselves framing the question: "After the Marshall Plan, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the money conferences, the grants and gifts and subsidies to almost any friendly nation anywhere — *why* is the world, and Europe in particular, so long in getting on its feet again?"

The mine in Greenland produces cryolite, an ice-like, translucent mineral found nowhere in quantity but on the Arksut Fjord in southwest Greenland. The mineral is used for some ceramics and some insecticides. But its special importance is in the manufacture of aluminum.

One day in the 1920s, an American aluminum firm began developing synthetic cryolite. However, the Green-

land mine's business seemed not to suffer much. Nineteen years later, it was still supplying the United States with 11,000 tons of cryolite annually. The synthetic American product amounted to less than 5000 tons.

Then World War II came. Suddenly, the United States needed cryolite as never before — for the aluminum for its war planes. The country's synthetic cryolite production was stepped up mightily. In the 1950s, it will be 27,000 tons. From Denmark's mine in Greenland, it is expected, will come to us a mere dribble of a few thousand pounds.

Now Denmark is one of the countries which would like to buy more from America — more tractors and harvester machines to speed food-needy Europe's recovery. But she cannot buy as many today as if she were still receiving American dollars from her Greenland cryolite.

Cryolite is an obscure commodity, but its case history is significant. It represents something which has been going on in the economy of the

C. LESTER WALKER is a free-lance writer whose contributions, mostly on technical subjects, have appeared in Collier's, Nation's Business, This Week, and many other magazines.

United States for at least three decades. For within 30 years, this country has developed an almost fantastic economic self-sufficiency.

How this came about is a tale of two world wars, of amazing peacetime technical and industrial efficiency, of superb research laboratories, of indefatigable agriculturists, and of genius in the use of substitutes.

II

The story is discernible in product after product, and one may begin almost anywhere. For instance, with what concerns the land: fertilizer. Before World War I, this country depended for nitrogen fertilizer upon Chile, which produced 95 per cent of the world's sodium nitrate. But in 1918, the American government began to build a nitrogen fixation plant at Muscle Shoals, Alabama; and ten years later, Americans in Hopewell, Virginia, made sodium nitrate synthetically which was identical with Chile's. Then came the second war — and skyrocketing demand. Today, for Chile's sake, we make agreements not to operate some government nitrogen plants, because our production capacity is more than twice what post-war consumption is expected to be.

In the early 1900s, Germany was kingpin in the world of dyes. Her synthetic indigo alone had ruined the business of India, where a former

million-and-a-half acres devoted to the indigo plant had dropped off to about 214,000 acres. In 1913, the Germans produced 80 per cent of the world's dyes and supplied most of the ingredients for the remaining 20 per cent. The United States was consuming 26,000 tons of dyes a year but was making only 3000.

With the 1914-18 war came the end of German supply. American manufacturers established extensive dye research laboratories and set up fellowships in our colleges to train chemists, with the result that we were soon making our own synthetic dyes. By 1923, nine tenths of U. S. consumption was United States made, with 18 million pounds over for export. On the eve of the second war, the Americans were making a thousand different types of dyes, and their production in tonnage was abreast of Germany's. The war then gave them something additional. Their armies in Germany took possession of all dye patents and formulas, including secret processes. "Some are colors we never were able to make," as one American dyemaker has declared. "So now we don't need *any* dyes from anyone."

Most spectacular of our war-induced self-sufficiencies, perhaps, is that of rubber. The war forced us to build a truly stupendous synthetic rubber industry. In 1940, our pur-

chases of crude rubber (all we used then) were 1.8 billion pounds. Four years later our new wartime plants were turning out 2 billion pounds of synthetic. And they could turn out more today. Moreover, their product, which for some uses is superior to natural rubber, has already gone lower in price.

Highly vital to us in the recent war was mica — essential for radio and radar, for electric generators and insulators. The War Department had planes bringing it from India. In 1939, we imported 95.7 per cent of all that we used. Today, the Defense Department knows how to make mica here artificially, in carbon crucibles, using mica's natural ingredients and great heat. The process is something the Germans discovered and our armies acquired from them.

From Formosa every year used to come to us millions of pounds of camphor to be used in our plastics and smokeless-powder industries. The Chinese distilled it from the twigs of the camphor laurel tree. In 1933, our industrialists began to make camphor synthetically, from turpentine. Within three years, we were supplying half our own needs. Today we can produce more than we can use.

Where the two wars have not pushed us into becoming independent of the rest of the world, American technological ingenuity and efficiency

have. For instance, the case of optical glass and optical instruments. Little of either was made here 35 years ago. We depended on France, England and Germany. Then our National Bureau of Standards set up a pilot plant to develop formulas and processes. Soon a few private firms ventured into business. By the time of World War II, their glass filled 95 per cent of U. S. needs. Photographic lenses, telescopes, microscopes, precision instruments told the same story. By 1939, Americans used \$12.5 million worth, imported only \$2 million. Today, our manufacturers can produce any and all types.

We used to buy all of our cigarette paper from France — \$10 million worth a year. It was made by a secret process from linen rags collected in Central Europe. An immigrant, Harry H. Straus, invented a method of making it direct from flax fiber, and today four American mills turn out all the tobacco industry needs. There is \$10 million a year deducted from the amount France can spend for American goods.

III

Everyone knows the story of silk and nylon. How once we depended on Japan for 80 to 90 million pounds of silk a year, much of it for hosiery. How Du Pont's chemists produced a gossamery filament one day from coal,

air and water! Now nearly half a billion dollars a year once spent for silk stays at home.

The researchers have recently even made us self-sufficient in chicle for chewing gum. Up to 15 million pounds a year, and value of \$7 million, has come from Mexico and Guatemala — the juice of a tropical tree. Now there is a laboratory chicle. The gum chewers rarely can tell the difference, although it's made of acetic acid and acetylene, among other things. And it's cheaper than the natural product.

Our agriculturists have done much in the past few decades to make America self-adequate. In wheat, corn, potatoes, oranges and other major crops, of course, we produce great surpluses. And crops once foreign-raised now grow here in vast quantities. The soybean used to come to us from Manchuria. American farmers now produce 200 million bushels a year.

Sugar, perhaps you think, is something America could never be self-sufficient in. Such is not the case. In a year when the United States imported 3 million tons, it produced 2.2 million tons itself, cane and beet, in Florida, Louisiana and the West. And the amounts imported could also be raised here if necessary. The Florida Everglades would be the place.

Even the most alien crops have succumbed to ingenuity, and flourish here. For instance, our agriculturists have planted fig orchards in the Southwest which now yield over 60 million pounds, almost twice our one-time imports from Turkey and Greece. Previous to 1920, all our dates were imported — from North Africa and the Middle East. But the U. S. Department of Agriculture introduced date palms to desert areas in Southern California and Arizona. Iraq and North African governments soon banned export of any date trees, fearing what the Americans might accomplish. Our growers tried new methods, new ideas. They cut off half the female date blossoms, so there would be fewer dates but bigger ones; for protection from damaging fogs and birds they covered every ripening bunch with paraffin paper bags. Now American palms produce more than 20 million pounds yearly.

IV

"If there is something," a foreigner once remarked, "which the Americans cannot make, or mine, or grow themselves, then they will not rest until they have found a substitute."

We are short of tungsten for our tool steels. We get most of it from China or Bolivia. But we have found that in some cases molybdenum will do instead; and we have a whole

mountain of molybdenum in Colorado. Short of tin? We coat the insides of cans with lacquer. Or we wrap with foil of aluminum or cellophane. For shellac from India (varnish, phonograph records, insulation) we substitute synthetic resins or a material made from corn gluten. For burlap — from India's greatest dollar-earning export (jute) — we successfully use sacks of tough, long fibre spruce kraft papers. And what of it if we can't grow cork to stopper our bottles with? We use instead millions of a new kind of closure, of wax-covered cardboard.

The list of products which we no longer need to import could be extended indefinitely. It would include Christmas-tree ornaments, for which we used to pay Germans and Czechs \$1.5 million a year, but which we now turn out more cheaply on our own mass-production machines. It would include pig bristles from which most of our brushes used to be made. We bought great quantities of them from China, where hogs are not killed until they are so old that their bristles are stiff and where hand labor to pluck them from the hides is cheap. Now the Chinese have lost that source of revenue; our brushes are now made with nylon bristles. East Africa and Japan used to get dollars with which to buy American goods by selling us dried pyrethrum flowers

from which insecticides were made. American-made chemicals have largely supplanted pyrethrum.

The expert finishing of furs was once a multi-million-dollar source of annual revenue to the great fur firms of Leipzig. Now, partly through the importation of skilled men and partly through the development of American finishing and dyeing machines, the industry is wholly American.

But what does our remarkable self-sufficiency all add up to? It has brought this country to the point where it produces, economists have estimated, 94 per cent of the produce it consumes. Even previous to the late war, we were producing one quarter of the annual total product of the whole world. Yet we had only 6 per cent of the population. And economists predict that we shall soon be producing of the world's goods a full one third.

Magnificent achievement — but a sobering one. One which, perhaps, should cause Americans to remember Kipling's words about "an humble and a contrite heart." For it means that, needing so little of other countries, there is slight reason we should buy their products. Hence they are without the dollars to buy from us the many things they so vitally need. And hence, to a large extent, the world's painfully-slow recovery.

For the fact is that if America had

half what it has and needed twice what it does, the solution of the world's major economic difficulties would probably be much simpler.

However, American self-sufficiency is by no means a permanent drag on world recovery. We need little from abroad now compared to former days (when once we imported 20 per cent of the commodities we consumed) but we have tremendous buying power, and we are going to become again, inevitably, one of the great importing nations of the world. Just as England was when she was a prosperous creditor nation.

We shall import great quantities of the commodities which we *do* need, such as the critical minerals — cobalt, vanadium, etc. — for our military stockpile. (Congress has authorized two billion dollars for just such purchases.) We must also import bauxite — a basic part of aluminum — from Canada and Dutch Guiana; platinum from Canada and Colombia; tin from Bolivia; chromite, cobalt and man-

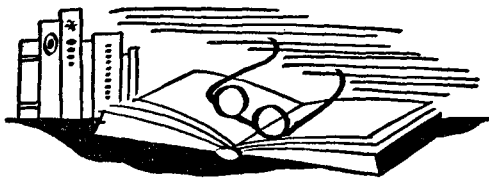
ganese from other parts of the world. A few foodstuffs must be imported, such as tea, coffee, bananas. We shall buy luxury goods, as French perfumes, laces, champagnes, china. And largest will be our “invisible” imports: shipping space in foreign vessels, insurance in foreign companies, and — already for Great Britain the biggest source of dollar income — the expenditures of American tourists in foreign lands.

Paul G. Hoffman, America's Marshall Plan administrator, has declared that the solution of Europe's dollar shortage would be in sight if the nineteen Marshall Plan nations sold us an additional \$2.5 billion worth of goods and raw materials. A goal, the Marshall Plan chief says, “both practical and realizable.”

America's self-sufficiency, phenomenal as it is, and independent as it does make us of the rest of the world, need not stand as an insurmountable barrier on the world's road to economic recovery.



THE LIBRARY



THE INTELLECTUALS DISCOVER AMERICA

by CHARLES ANGOFF

HISTORY written by participants in, or contemporaries of, the events recorded is seldom of a high order. There are exceptions, of course. Those that occur to mind at the moment are Xenophon's *Anabasis* and Winston Churchill's account of World War II, which has yet to be completed. But even these two works, for all their virtues, suffer from partisanship, as they inevitably have to, for no man, however great, is great enough to view himself and his actions under the aspect of eternity. He is inclined to reduce disastrous errors on his part to minor blemishes or to impute them to others, or he may assume more credit than is due him, or he may fail to see the significance of this or that occurrence, because he had no hand in it or because he is not sufficiently acute to grasp the interrelationships of certain events. In the *Anabasis*, Xenophon manages to give

the impression that if it had not been for his superb generalship, the retreat from the Tigris to Trapezus would have ended catastrophically, whereas there were many other factors involved in that expedition. A similar form of self-adulation appears in Churchill's work. He doubtless appreciated more fully than Prime Ministers Baldwin and Chamberlain the ulterior motives of the Germans, but it is also true, to mention only two things, that he had considerable admiration for Mussolini and his form of government, and that he was gravely misled by Stalin on the Mihailovich-Tito affair. Yet there is barely a hint in his work of these very serious errors of judgment.

Most great histories have been written by men centuries removed from the times they dealt with. Edward Gibbon's only direct contact with Rome was the sight of its ruins, and W. H. Prescott learned about early Mexico and the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella chiefly by way of books read to him by secretaries. In a

sense, Gibbon knew less about the affairs of Rome than the lowliest Roman of those days, for the consultation of documents can never take the place of actual experience. But in another sense, he knew immensely more than the most philosophical of Romans. From the vantage point of a time several hundreds of years later, he could state the immediate significance of events and also their long-range effects upon human affairs. Similarly with Prescott and Spain and Mexico. Similarly with all other great historians.

There is, however, considerable importance in contemporary historical writing. It never achieves the status of true history. It is very often marred by special pleading. It can seldom lift itself from the level of reporting, however good. Yet it is valuable as documentation, and sometimes, as in the cases of the aforementioned Xenophon and Churchill, it also has standing as literature. Such documentation is especially desirable about the period between the Treaty of Versailles and Pearl Harbor, perhaps as fateful a quarter-century as any other in all human annals thus far.

Miss Isabel Leighton makes a worthy contribution in her compilation, *The Aspirin Age, 1919-1941* [\$3.95, Simon & Schuster]. She has asked twenty-two authors, some of them active participants in important

events of the period, to describe and comment upon specific personalities and happenings of that era. Thus Harry Hansen writes about "The Forgotten Men of Versailles," Herbert Asbury about Prohibition, Irving Stone about "Calvin Coolidge: A Study in Inertia," Thurman Arnold about "The Crash — and What It Meant," Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., about "The First Hundred Days of the New Deal," Hodding Carter about "Huey Long: American Dictator," Jonathan Daniels about "Pearl Harbor Sunday: The End of an Era," and Wallace Stegner about "The Radio Priest and His Flock." Some of the chapters, including all those just mentioned, are excellent: packed with information, vigorously written, and maturely thought out. Perhaps the one that will endure the longest is Mr. Carter's essay on Huey Long. He writes about Long from intense personal experience and with the hatred born of a full realization of the menace that he was, but he also writes with admirably restrained passion.

Some of the other chapters are either trivial or poorly written. Perhaps a more serious criticism is that there are various phases of those days that are wholly ignored. What about the influence of the book clubs? What about the spread of psychoanalysis? Didn't the *New Yorker* stamp the era to a large extent? Didn't THE AMERI-

CAN MERCURY also symbolize it? Miss Leighton devotes about twenty-five pages to Morris Markey's account of "The Mysterious Death of Starr Faithfull," but ignores H. L. Mencken completely. And what about the upheaval in the newspaper world — the rise of the New York *Daily News* and the death of the New York *World*? Isn't this subject as worthy of space as the recital of the romance between Wally Simpson and Edward VIII?

II

But despite its faults of omission and commission, Miss Leighton's volume does recall, in part, an era that seems more and more fantastic as time goes on. Why she calls it "the aspirin age" is puzzling. By way of explanation she says that during those "throbbing years we searched in vain for a cure-all, coming no closer to it than the aspirin bottle." The search for a cure-all does not characterize the age or any appreciable part of it. For nearly the first half of it, the only search, among a large part of the population, was for pleasurable oblivion by way of the ancient trinity of wine, women, and song. What took place, in the hinterland as well as in the big cities, was probably the most awesome bacchanalia since the founding of the nation. Beginning with the Jazz Age, it mounted and mounted till it seemed, late in 1929, that the moral founda-

tions of the country were going to cave in. Taste and discretion seemed to vanish. Sinclair Lewis got a good deal of this into his best book, *Dodsworth*, and some is also reflected in the cartoons and stories of the *New Yorker* in 1926-1929; but the full richness and bizarre character of those days has yet to be adequately described.

Behind it all, of course, was the mountainous wealth of the nation. It seemed everyone played the market, and it seemed that Wall Street was an endless cornucopia. With this went one basic assumption, to wit, that business, as practiced in this country, was truly magical, right, and sound. Indeed, as Judge Thurman Arnold points out, business had assumed a sanctity and power that recalled the medieval church before the Reformation. It ruled "by accepted beliefs in established truths."

The crash proved that business was a human institution run by fallible human beings. It proved a great deal more. It proved, in the words of Mr. Schlesinger, "the bankruptcy of business leadership." Mr. John W. Davis told Washington that he had no suggestions, "either of fact or theory," for getting the country out of the mess, and all Mr. W. W. Atterbury, of the Pennsylvania Railroad, had to say was that "the only way to beat the depression is to hit the bottom and then slowly build up."

President Roosevelt's phrase, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," did as much as anything else, at least during the first few months, to restore confidence. That was an achievement of stupendous proportions, for probably at no other time had the United States come so close to disaster. As Mr. Schlesinger points out, "the fires of a real revolution were beginning to burn — not in the gray cheerlessness of Union Square, not in the swamps of Anacostia, but in the middle-class heart of the nation, in the most prosperous farm lands of the Middle West." The fires continued to flicker for a long time, and those two arch-demagogues, Huey Long and Father Coughlin, tried to fan them back into flame, but the country, for all its vacillating, followed the leadership of the man in the White House.

In the long view of future historians it may be that his chief contribution will lie in the very realm that has caused so much controversy between the two major political parties and even in his own party. That is the realm of the relationship between business and the State. It had long been known that the nineteenth-century doctrine of *laissez faire* in practice led to monopoly, which meant economic tyranny. It threatened the well-being of the people, which was the proper business of the

State. Hence it challenged the State. The battle between the two is not something foisted upon the community by any one man. It is an inevitable development of the industrial revolution. Some of President Roosevelt's measures for meeting the issue may have been ill-advised; some even may have had the seeds of totalitarianism in them. But more than any other President, he centralized and dramatized the issue. He pushed through an enormous amount of social legislation, much of which has become part and parcel of our mode of living. As bill followed bill, he got closer and closer to the electorate, which looked upon him as a sort of national *pater familias*. No other President, in his life-time, and over so long a period, has had so firm a grasp upon the affection of the people and influenced the nation so profoundly, for good or ill, in the politico-economic realm.

III

Intellectually, the quarter century presented a development of at least equal importance to that which took place in politics and economics. One would naturally think that the prosperity which largely prevailed in the years 1919-1929 would have brought forth novels and poems and essays in praise of the form of life that made such riches possible. Ac-

tually, the atmosphere in the writing world was one of almost virulent animosity to the American way of life. Writers seemed to vie with one another as to who could say the most contemptible things, not only about contemporary affairs, but about our past. There was a wave of debunking. Historians of standing in colleges and universities discovered that many of the Founding Fathers loved food and carried on with women and had ulcers, dandruff, athlete's foot, and tooth trouble. Such ailments apparently made them unworthy of any respect. Even Abraham Lincoln, General Grant, and Woodrow Wilson, did not escape the mud-slinging. The intellectuals seemed to urge all to form a parade with placards bearing the legend, "Down With Our Forebears!"

Sinclair Lewis directed his scorn at the American businessman of his day. Instead of trying to understand him sympathetically, he made fun of the businessman's very considerable gifts to make useful products cheaply for the benefit of a large number of people. The businessman fought back by pointing out that his endeavors had raised the American level of life to the highest point, not only in our history, but in all human history. This claim merely proved to Lewis and his fellow-scorners that George Babbitt was little better than an ape.

Many of the intellectuals and artists found life on these shores so unbearable that they exiled themselves to France and Italy, where they hoped to escape from American Philistinism. Those who couldn't go, for one reason or another, followed Lewis' lead and dug into all corners of our national being in search of people and things to make fun of. They found plenty. Lewis himself came up with a prize exhibit in Elmer Gantry, and through him made fun of virtually all religious people and beliefs. On one occasion, in a public hall, he challenged God to strike him dead.

In New York and the other big cities, the rage of national self-degradation took the form of laughing at democracy, at monogamy, at social manners, at the entire educational system, at all professors, at people who saved money, were temperate drinkers and found pleasure in the company of their wives and children — at practically everybody and everything that previously had stood for decency and humanity. It became fashionable to look down upon the display of emotion, and love and affection were considered the possession of infantile and backward folk. The early *New Yorker*, *College Humor*, and the old *Life* and *Judge*, were filled with cartoons and sketches reflecting these superior ideas.

Riding on the crest of this wave of

emancipation was a new group of novels and poems. They were brittle things. In the novels, the women imbibed dozens of cocktails, were very quick and generous with their favors, and boasted impartiality in the choice of their bed-companions. The poems were "modern," that is, they had no rhythm, no rhyme, no inspiration and no sense — but these attributes were considered marks of real poetry.

The crash of 1929 at first had little effect upon these advanced intellectuals. Then many of them became infected with the Communist ideology, and pretty soon a new aberration made its debut: proletarian literature. It offered no competition to the betough-and-sneer school for a while. It indiscriminately extolled city workers, farmers, and Negroes, and it set up the fictionized argumentative pamphlet as the true model for the novel. The chief literary critic of these champions of the down-trodden pronounced Flaubert a worthless bourgeois, and hailed Mike Gold as a great writer.

But many writers continued to practice sexual stimulation in their writings and to look down upon most of their fellow Americans. Some maintained that writers, good or bad, had no business getting mixed up with politics and economics. One recent convert denounced all such writers as Irresponsibles and called upon them

to see the light and take sides in the issues of the day.

The plague of proletarian literature is now no more. Vulgar writing, posing as realism, however, is still with us. *The Naked and the Dead* and *A Rage to Live* are legitimate descendants of *Tobacco Road* and *Replenishing Jessica*. But there is evidence that such sleazy works will be relegated to oblivion in the not-too-distant future. The criticism of shabby realism is rising on all sides. It has reached even the review columns of an *avant garde* periodical, which called Mr. O'Hara's latest novel a dirty and tedious book, which is all it is. Erskine Caldwell's pointlessly offensive novels are finding fewer and fewer readers, and no serious critical approbation. A more encouraging sign is to be found in the quiet, probing writing, published in the little magazines, and in the first novels of young writers. One must also mention the revival of interest in the work of Willa Cather, perhaps the greatest American literary artist of the past quarter-century.

The best news of all for the spiritual health of the country is that the debunking mania is definitely over. More and more of our writers are seeing, some for the first time, what a truly magnificent land the United States is — what a rich culture it already has produced in nearly every one of the arts, what untold splendor

almost every nook and corner of it has for the man or woman with an eye to see and a heart to feel, how noble and romantic its history has been, what giants its Founding Fathers were, and, above all, what dazzling potentialities this greatest, most vital, and truest democracy on earth has. Even Sinclair Lewis, the man

with the big sneer, in his own lumbering, uninspired manner, has turned to writing novels in praise of America. His latest, *The God-Seeker*, is nothing less than a favorable portrait of a young missionary who spread calm and courage in the Middle West!

Perhaps we have achieved maturity at long last.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC: *GOLDEN TRUMPET*

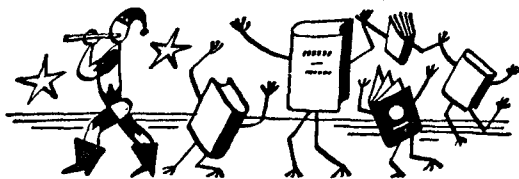
BY G. E. HUNTER

Morning in New Mexico
rears bold rosy rocks
at the rim of flat land
cactus-sown and strange
in the blue gloom
of a rainy autumn sky.

Afternoon in Texas
stretches a long sapphire cloud
over miles of level loneliness.

Evening in Kansas
televises white prodigious granaries
while the wide dusk slowly, slowly
veils windmills,
the brown backs of Herefords and horses,
and a single tree of cloud on the horizon.
The highway, fringed with sunflowers,
flows backward faster and faster
as the earth turns,
and the train, rushing to midnight and morning,
trumpets the dark questing note of speed.

THE CHECK LIST



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

OUR SOVEREIGN STATE, edited and with an introduction by Robert S. Allen. \$5.00. *Vanguard*. Twelve essays, mostly by newspapermen, inviting the reader to hold his nose at the spectacle of political corruption in their respective states. The states honored by inclusion in the book are Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Nebraska, Texas, Utah and California, but Mr. Allen hints broadly in his introduction that with a few thousand more pages to work in he could also have gone to town on the other 36. He believes that most of the arguments for "states' rights" are hypocritical, that they are largely inspired by business interests which find the weak and venal state governments easy to influence; and to illustrate his point, he quotes Earl Warren's admission that one California lobbyist had more power than the Governor.

TRADE UNIONS IN THE NEW SOCIETY, by Harold J. Laski. \$3.00. *Viking*. The *enfant terrible* of the Labour party is here calling on American labor

leaders to follow the precepts of the British: to unite in a single party rooted in the trade-union movement and possessed of a definite left-wing philosophy. He gets in some good whacks at the aimless "business unionism" which has infected much of American labor, but about 90 per cent of the argument can be disposed of with the truism that the United States is not Britain. The case is further marred by Professor Laski's weird ambivalence toward Soviet Russia, and by such occasional opacity as, "Trade-union philosophy, indeed, is generally more likely to develop after the trade union has twisted and turned to adapt itself to a developing situation than while the situation, in all its rich variety, is trying to find some stable basis of equilibrium in society."

THE PEOPLE DON'T KNOW, *The American Press and the Cold War*, by George Seldes. \$3.00. *Gaer*. The terrible-tempered Mr. Seldes on the warpath again, this time with the revelation that American journalism is whipping up a war scare. His indictment charges, among other things, that the press printed mostly nonsense about the "rape" of

Czechoslovakia (it was true love, he reports); that it is concealing the story of the Catholic Church's rule over the CIO; and that it has not sufficiently publicized the fact, well known to Mr. Seldes' followers, that Russian workers have the right to strike. In view of the author's long affliction with Stalinism, it is interesting that he should now be an ardent supporter of the renegade Tito.

A TREATISE ON CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS JURISPRUDENCE, by I. H. Rubenstein. \$2.50. *The Waldain Press*. This is a digest of American laws, both civil and criminal, regarding the practice of fortune-telling (including spiritualism, astrology, witchcraft, and clairvoyance), faith healing (including Yoga, Christian Science, and Psychic Healing), and pacifism (including Quakerism and the religion of Jehovah's Witnesses). The laws regarding these matters are complicated, varied, and highly interesting. The book makes fascinating reading and is a very useful reference book. Mr. Rubenstein is a member of the Illinois Bar.

WESTERN POLITICAL HERITAGE, edited by W. Y. Elliott and Neil A. McDonald. \$9.00. *Prentice-Hall*. A thousand large pages of readings in Western political philosophy, with 58 selections from such diverse thinkers as Moses, Pericles, Hume, Lenin and Truman, and a number of superb connective essays by the editors. The book is aimed at the text-book trade, but it would be a pity if it were not circulated generally.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

THE STRUGGLE FOR GERMANY, by Drew Middleton. \$3.00. *Bobbs-Merrill*. Another warning on our follies in Germany, this time by one of the best foreign correspondents in the business. Mr. Middleton thinks that the Russians have made themselves too unpopular in the Reich to stand any chance of winning on their merits, but his persuasive blasts at the empty-headedness of our own administration make it clear that the danger of a new totalitarianism there is real. Our rule in Germany, he believes, has been too "colonial," too much dominated by purely military considerations, and too little concerned with the problem of nationalism. "If a neo-fascist State is organized in Western Germany," he believes, "the transition from it to a Communist State will be swift indeed." First-rate journalism.

THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND, by George S. Counts and Nucia Lodge. \$4.00. *Houghton Mifflin*. A detailed and carefully documented report on the intellectual terror in the Soviet Union. The authors range over all of the arts and sciences, and their material, much of which was previously unpublished in this country, makes Orwell's 1984 seem not so remote. Soviet intellectuals, they report, have reached a condition in which their only hope for good health and long life lies in following explicitly this newly-popular Russian maxim: "If you think, don't speak! If you speak, don't write! If you write, don't publish! If you publish, recant immediately!"

BIOGRAPHY

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN, 1810-1849, edited by Stephen P. Mizwa. \$3.00. *Macmillan*. This volume is published in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the death of the great Polish composer. There are chapters on the composer's life and on various aspects of his work by such men as Howard Hansen, Olin Downes, music critic of the *New York Times*, and Abram Chasins. They are singularly uninspired. One section in the book, however, is valuable. It contains excerpts from Chopin's letters to a Countess Delfina Potocka, for whom he had at least very warm feelings. In these excerpts, Chopin offers his opinions of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and music in general. These opinions not only have obvious biographical importance, but some of them are penetrating in themselves. There are many illustrations.

LEAP TO FREEDOM, by Oksana Kasenkina. \$3.00. *Lippincott*. Mme. Kasenkina, the school-teacher who created an international incident last year when she jumped from a window of the Soviet Consulate in New York rather than return to Russia, has a moving story to tell. She had tried, all her life, to be non-political, but since she was an intellectual this proved impossible: her husband was sent to a labor camp in Siberia, and her son, also considered "unreliable" by the State, was assigned to a Red Army unit that was marked for slaughter. Her report of the spying and intrigue among Soviet citizens abroad

makes grim reading. About the only light touch in the book is her description of Andrei Gromyko's towering rage when his son took up with the daughter of a mere chauffeur.

27 **MASTERS OF POLITICS** *In a Personal Perspective*, by Raymond Moley. \$3.50. *Funk & Wagnalls*. Chatty, informal portraits of some politicians Mr. Moley has known and worked with, most of them associated with the early years of the New Deal. None of the portraits goes very deep, and the collection as a whole does not prove much of anything, but the wealth of anecdotal material the author picked up during his years in Washington makes him continuously readable. Except for those of Henry Wallace and Huey Long, the sketches tend to be sympathetic; Mr. Moley's break with the New Deal seems to have left him without rancor.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY, by Samuel Flagg Bemis. \$7.50. *Knopf*. This massive biography of the second Adams deals with the years before he became President, but that period of his life was probably more important than the succeeding one. It was then that he represented this country in many capitals and in many negotiations of a major order. Dr. Bemis' judgment is that "More than any other one man he helped to shape the foundations of American foreign policy and the future of the United States as a Continental Republic." This is why Dr. Bemis calls his monumental

and amazingly readable book a "diplomatic biography." He is professor of diplomatic history and inter-American relations at Yale.

MEN WHO MAKE YOUR WORLD, by members of the Overseas Press Club of America, with a foreword by Frank Kelley and an introduction by John Barkham. \$3.50. *Dutton*. An arresting collection of profiles by some of the best newspapermen in the country, appraising the places in history of our contemporary statesmen. Two of the chapters have appeared in the *MERCURY* (those on Clement Attlee and Chaim Weizmann), but most of the other twenty-two were previously unpublished. The portraits of Beria, Tito, De Gaulle and Smuts deserve special mention.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF WILL ROGERS, edited by Donald Day, with a foreword by Will Rogers, Jr., and Jim Rogers. \$3.00. *Houghton Mifflin*. By pasting together some fragments of Will Rogers' writings (mostly from his newspaper column) on himself, politics, show business, and several hundred other subjects, Mr. Day has turned out a book which is probably not much different from what his hero's autobiography would have been if he had ever written one. In any case, it is enormously funny. Rogers' erratic spelling and deadpan humor often make him sound like someone out of a Ring Lardner story, but his genuine love for all humanity — politicians excepted — always keeps him on a considerably higher plane than Lardner's small-town philistines.

MISCELLANEOUS

THE THEATRE BOOK OF THE YEAR, by George Jean Nathan. \$4.00. *Knopf*. This is Mr. Nathan's seventh successive annual of the American theatre, and it is now abundantly clear that the series will become the most authoritative source book, both as information and as criticism, of the contemporary American drama. The period covered is from May 1948 (*The Habimah Company*) to April 25, 1949 (*The Happiest Years*). Readers of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* do not have to be told that Mr. Nathan's essay-reviews are perhaps the shrewdest and wittiest now being written in the United States. On his Honor List, he gives top honors for the best American play to Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and for the best foreign play to Jean Giradoux's *The Madwoman of Chaillos*, "the faulty adaptation notwithstanding."

YOU AND YOUR FEARS, by Peter J. Steincrohn, M.D. \$2.50. *Doubleday*. One of the better books about the evil effects of fear on the human organism. Dr. Steincrohn writes in a pleasant, chatty manner, and he knows when to drive a point home with a case history.

EVERYMAN'S TALMUD, by the Rev. Dr. A. Cohen. \$4.50. *Dutton*. The complete text of the Talmud occupies some thirty volumes, and thus has long been unavailable to general readers. Dr. Cohen here offers a digest of them, with special regard for the interests of the non-specialist. He has done a masterly job.

THE OPEN FORUM



THE HOW AND WHY OF GENIUS

SIR: I have read with great interest Mr. Waverley Root's article in the October MERCURY: "Women Are Intellectually Inferior." I can hardly believe that Mr. Root intended anything else than to be provocative. He is a brilliant man and I believe it has been definitely established that sons inherit their mental capacities from their mothers.

I should like to tell Mr. Root of one woman whom I believe to have been an authentic genius. We were children and girls and women together. Elsa was my classmate, a girl of extraordinary beauty and possessed of the loveliest voice I have ever heard. At fourteen she was locally famous, for though she could not read a note of music — and never really learned — she could sing as I hope the angels can sing. Moreover, she had a tremendous dramatic genius, and her acting, on local stages, held adults fascinated. Our teachers took a great interest in her — poor, underpaid, devoted women — and when the director of a famous opera company visited our city they went in a body and pleaded with him to hear Elsa sing. . . . He was deeply struck by her incredible

beauty, but when she sang he forgot this in his stupefaction over her voice. He told the teachers that he would induce his company to subsidize the girl and insure her future. While he was promising this, Elsa wandered over to the piano in his suite, sat down and began to play. The director fell silent, and listened. . . . He questioned Elsa, who told him she often played on the neighbors' pianos, and that the compositions she played "just come into my mind."

The director then told the teachers that not only had this girl the most amazing voice he had ever heard but that she was a pianist of incredible promise, and a potential composer. He, personally, induced the director of a famous music school to visit Elsa and hear her play, and this man assured the mother of Elsa, and her teachers, and his friend, that some day Elsa would be the first female composer of authentic magnitude, a true genius. He offered to take Elsa to his school and personally teach her.

Unfortunately, Elsa's widowed mother "had no use for such worldly things." She refused to allow Elsa to leave her, or

even to accompany her, in spite of the pleadings of both directors, who offered to support mother and daughter for several years. . . .

At eighteen, Elsa married a struggling young clerk. She told me later she had done this in order to escape her mother, and with the pathetic hope that some day her husband would buy her a piano. But the babies began to come in quick succession. However, after the third baby's birth, her husband managed to buy her an ancient piano, and during intervals between the care of her children and her housework she played.

I last saw her when she was expecting her fourth child. We were 25 then. She happily told me that she had just bought some old music books and was beginning to learn to read music. Then she sat at her piano and played for me, and all were her own memorized compositions. Since that time, I have heard the greatest pianists, and become very familiar with the noblest music. Yet I can truly say that Elsa's playing and Elsa's music equal, if not surpass, anything I have ever heard. Her music was not "light and charming," but had enormous power and grandeur. . . .

She died in childbirth three months later. Learning of this, through one of Elsa's teachers, the director of the opera company, now possibly the world's most famous conductor, wrote Elsa's husband and expressed his grief. I saw the letter. Among other things, he said: "The world has lost a female Mozart and a singer whose voice I have never heard equaled."

I sometimes wonder how many female

geniuses have died so tragically. . . . If that conductor remembers poor Elsa, and reads this, I wish he would write to Mr. Root and confirm my story, and thus convince Mr. Root that quite a number of things prevent women from producing geniuses.

TAYLOR CALDWELL

Eggertsville, N. Y.

SIR: With reference to Waverley Root's article on female inferiority—the theory he presented states that predisposition to genius may be a recessive sex-linked hereditary character, occasionally present in an X-chromosome and affecting only males.

It appears to me that one objection to this view is that nothing very concrete can be offered by way of support. Physical attributes such as eye color, haemophilia, and color blindness, are tangible hereditary traits, while mental attributes are not so substantial. . . .

Perhaps a more logical explanation for women's intellectual inferiority can be made by regarding it as having been of *utility* to mankind at one time in the past. It may have been a protective device of Nature, functioning perhaps for longer than the entire Pleistocene epoch, the purpose of which was to aid in the survival of the human race. Just as greater mental and physical development helped men to achieve superiority over other species of life, their corresponding underdevelopment in women served to render them better guardians of the young in whatever refuge the primitive tribe or family chose as a home. Whether by

natural selection or mutation, such faculties as curiosity, imagination and daring were bred out of women. . . .

LAWRENCE NASSBERG

New York City

SIR: . . . Why should women strive in frenzied competition for public recognition as geniuses? They hold in their own hearts and hands all that is worthwhile on this earth — which is, after all, only a temporary dwelling-place.

RUBY GUNDERSON

Farmingdale, N. J.

SIR: . . . The strong biological urge in women has kept them in due subjection — they creep into the arms of any tyrant of a man for the sake of carrying out their destiny, and the resultant child becomes the property of the man, who has done so little to produce it. . . .

Go back to your place, has been the cry of men through the ages. Be the little unthinking partner, keep your place, and if you suit me, I'll be kind. How a man hates to recognize genius in a woman! . . .

TERESA MOTHERAL

San Francisco, Cal.

HOWE ON DOSTOYEVSKY

SIR: "Dostoyevsky as Journalist," by Irving Howe [see "The Library" in the October MERCURY], is the best piece of literary criticism I have read in your — or any other — magazine in many years. To read it was a pure joy.

LOUIS BLAKE DUFF

Welland, Ontario, Canada

CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS—ROUND THREE

SIR: The debate in the September MERCURY [see "Protestant Concern over Catholicism," by the Rev. W. Russell Bowie, and "The Catholic Position—A Reply," by John Courtney Murray, S.J.] has just been called to my attention. The fact that a man of Dr. Bowie's intellectual stature should have been influenced by such individuals as Bishop Oxnam and Paul Blanshard to take such a biased, unbalanced view of Catholicism fills me with deep regret.

The position of *all* religion in the United States is thereby greatly weakened. Dr. Bowie's most enthusiastic supporters are those who tomorrow would hail the overthrow of all religion. As for the effect of such articles on the Catholic Church, has Dr. Bowie never heard of the maxim: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"? . . .

I write anonymously because I know that one who has been blinded by prejudice cannot be expected to act reasonably, and I would protect my loved ones who are Protestants. I am a convert to Catholicism but still live in a strongly liberal Protestant environment. At one time, I received a B.D. degree from a liberal Protestant seminary. . . .

ANONYMOUS

New York City

SIR: . . . The Rev. J. C. Murray is so confident of his own infallibility in defending the Church that he apparently did not trouble to read Dr. Bowie's article. The latter contained just, logical

and specific reasons why a non-Catholic majority desires to avoid the totalitarian dictates of the Roman hierarchy. Instead of answering these charges, Rev. Murray dismisses them as "nonsense" and "absurdities." He fills his allotted space with sarcasm and then bemoans the fact that he doesn't have "fifty pages" with which to defend his position. Not one word of explanation regarding the banning of the *Nation*, the North College Hill case, or any of the innumerable infringements on our educational, cultural, medical and ethical standards.

Like the Cardinal's attack on Mrs. Roosevelt, the Rev. Murray presents such a weak case that it is worse than no answer at all.

VIRGINIA CREWS

Winston-Salem, N. C.

SIR: It is not without trepidation that one enters the arena of polemics; however, I believe that Father Murray's essay does merit some comment. I was surprised to note that Father Murray follows a rather hack routine in his rebuttal, for it is easier to refute epistemologically or metaphysically by pushing the burden of proof (and accusation) off to Dean Bowie than it is to state precisely and definitively where and why Dr. Bowie errs and how. To state in an almost "apologetic" Greek-chorus manner, in an aside to the audience, that these questions are so vast and so general that it would take reams of paper to reply adequately to them, and then to squander the relatively liberal amount of space set aside by THE AMERICAN

MERCURY to present an extremely generalized attempt at rebuttal is poor tactics.

By attempting to associate certain arguments used by Protestant writers with those used by the Communists, by stooping to rather thinly veiled sarcasm about the relative Protestant opposition (as compared with the Catholic) to the "real enemies," presumably Communism and assorted evils, Father Murray is borrowing the same type of argument he alleges to be refuting.

The transfer of the bones of snatches of ecclesiastic and lay writings from one religious grave to another to support one's argument, no matter how just or sanctimonious one may feel about his principles, is as equally reprehensible in the Father as in Dr. Bowie. In ten pages I feel that Father Murray has given us a smooth but not always logical essay. Not a reply or rebuttal, but an essay. Traumatic explanations, atavistic Protestant throwbacks, argumenta *ipsi dixit*, and Father Murray's own explanation of progressive assertion unfortunately seem to rebound inversely, in a most marked manner, back to the accuser, and make me wonder whether the Father met the issues presented by Dr. Bowie squarely or whether it was more facile to beat the drum once more about secularisms, and other "old boogies."

WILBERT B. DUBIN

Washington, D. C.

WHOSE HOOSEGOWS?

SIR: I have just read Joseph Fulling Fishman's article, "Our Comic-Opera Hoosegows," in the August MERCURY.

Mr. Fishman might be surprised to learn that some features of the comic-opera hoosegows can and actually do exist in such superior centers of civilization as — New York! New York City, I mean.

When I was studying for my M.E. degree at City College back in the good old depression days, I generally drove a taxicab at night for the useful shekels it would bring in. Times were tough, and traffic laws were broken freely by cab drivers. U-turns on Eighth Avenue and Forty-fifth Street during the 11 P.M. theatre rush, two wheels on the sidewalk to chisel a call off the Waldorf-Astoria line at 8:30 P.M., perpetual double-parking on Thirty-fourth Street near Sixth Avenue at 4:30 P.M., etc., were all fairly common, and so, naturally, were tickets for traffic violations.

Well, one time, seething with righteous indignation at the number of tickets that came my way, I manfully spoke up and elected a one-day sentence rather than fork over the \$2 fine. (Two dollars was a lot of money in those days.) By the time I was sentenced it was 1:30 P.M., so my one-day sentence would expire in three hours. I sat it out, grouching continually with another driver.

While we were sitting there, an old jailer came around offering to sell sandwiches at approximately twice their fair price. We declined. By 3 P.M., it started to rain cats and dogs, and like all good hackies, we sat and suffered, thinking of all the business we were losing. But we need not have worried! At 3:30 P.M., a younger jailer came around, and, in the true comic-opera tradition, let us out.

As he explained it, "It's raining, and you guys better get to the garage before 4 o'clock if you want to get a car."

E. LAAS

West Hartford, Conn.

MR. BLANSHARD IN REVIEW

SIR: Your review of Paul Blanshard's *American Freedom and Catholic Power* [see the October "Check List"] shows as much sympathy with the Church as the author himself does. If a book of half-truths, illogical and unwarranted deductions from "out-of-text-excerpts" is an evidence of tremendous scholarship, then Blanshard has it. Let no one fool you, Mr. Blanshard has an obvious antipathy to the Catholic Church, both as a visible religious organization set up by Christ and as a force in modern social life.

I've read the book and in all truth cannot find justification for the lavish praise you accord it. It will be remembered only through the survival of the reality it attacks.

REV. RAYMOND McDERMOTT

Milwaukee, Wis.

THE POET'S PLIGHT

SIR: Now that Mr. Stanton Coblentz has presented the side of the editor of the little poetry magazine [see "The Woes of a Poetry Editor," in the August *MERCURY*], may I say a word in behalf of the poets? I am one of those who appear fairly regularly in many of the little magazines, and incidentally the first one I did appear in (after numerous rejec-

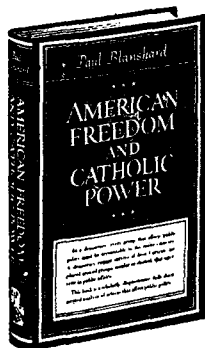
(Continued on page 766)

INDEX TO VOLUME LXIX

Adams, J. Donald: Women and Fiction . . .	304	Douglas, Senator, Meets the Press	322
Alexander, John W. & Berger, Morroe: Is the Town Meeting Finished?	144	Doyle, Marion: "The Thoughts of Youth Are Long, Long Thoughts"	675
Ames, Evelyn: Two Solitudes	354	Drake, Francis & Katharine: The Treasure of Great Bear Lake	349
Anonymous: Portrait of an Ex-Lifer	727	Eisler, Gerhart, Meets the Press	5
Angoff, Charles: Baccalaureate Sermon . .	376	Evans, Bergen: The Skeptics' Corner	172, 444, 694
Curley and the Boston Irish	619	Evans, Oliver: Disenchantment	161
The Intellectuals Discover America . .	748	Everts, Lillian: Perspective	224
Berger, Morroe & Alexander, John W.: Is the Town Meeting Finished?	144	Fishman, Joseph Fulling: Our Comic- Opera Hoosegows	176
Bird, Caroline: The New Look at Vassar . .	46	Dishonor Among Thieves	296
Blackwell, Harriet Gray: The State of South Carolina	477	Fliers, Serge: Gromyko: Portrait of a Russian Diplomat	284
Bowie, W. Russell: Protestant Concern Over Catholicism	261	Carlos Romulo	685
Brown, Wenzell: Anansi and Brer Rabbit .	438	Frank, Gerold: Chaim Weizmann	24
Chamberlin, Jo: "You Too Can Write!" . .	570	Freeman, Lucy: My Experience with Psychoanalysis	415
Check List, The . . . 122, 245, 377, 503, 628,	755	Fuller, Ethel Romig: Fear	459
Clayton, John Bell: The Summer of the Insistent Voices	716	Fuller, James & Peta: The Other Side of the Wonder Drugs	460
Coblentz, Stanton A.: The Woes of a Poetry Editor	219	Fumento, Rocco L.: Alfredo's Sweetheart .	202
Cowles, Virginia: Mr. Churchill	389	Flynn, John T.: The Case Against Deficit Spending	656
Craft, William Ellsworth: Conquering the Common Cold	564	Garrett, Oliver H. P.: The Candy Bar . . .	548
Cross, Louise: The Anti-Vivisection Non- sense	212	Gauld, C. A. & Scully, M.: The Man Who Knows All About Snake Bites	488
Dallin, David J.: The Black Market in Russia	676	Herman, Louis Jay: Phrase Origins — 51 . .	229
Davidson, Gustav: At the Setting of the Sun	112	Phrase Origins — 52	319
Dean, Elma: To a Hill Boy Growing Up .	103	Phrase Origins — 55	563
Deitch, Joseph: The Color Line	15	Hillyer, Robert: Home Port	143
de Vito, Ethel Barnett: Fifteenth Anni- versary	340	Hines, William: West Point — Myth and Reality	162
Music	487	Holbrook, Stewart H.: Mysterious Billy Smith	104
Devoe, Alan: Nature-Fakes (Or Are They?)	98	When the Yankees Took California . .	360
The World of Ants	225	The Steam-Calliope Man	613
The Cowbird	355	Howe, Irving: Dostoyevsky as Journalist . .	494
Naturalist's Progress	483	Hunter, G. E.: Southern Pacific: <i>Golden Trumpet</i>	754
Screch Owl	609	Hynd, Alan: Comstock: Crusader Against	
The Biology of Freedom	737		

Sin.....	184	Root, Waverley: Women Are Intellectually Inferior.....	407
Murder in Hollywood.....	594	Rosenblum, Morris: Phrase Origins — 50.....	63
Imperial Emperor of the KKK, The, Meets the Press.....	529	Phrase Origins — 53.....	348
Ingraham, Vernon Leland: Winter Love.....	414	Phrase Origins — 54.....	502
Jennings, Leslie Nelson: Belden Hollow.....	359	Phrase Origins — 56.....	703
Cruise Ship.....	575	Roosevelt, James: The Case for Deficit Spending.....	647
Kahn, Hannah: Eve's Daughter.....	493	Rusk, Howard A. & Taylor, Eugene J.: Mentally Retarded Children.....	698
Kaufman, Schima: Morton Gould.....	83	Saroyan, William: Once Around the Block.....	663
Keith, Joseph Joel: Pastoral.....	82	Scully, M. & Gauld, C. A.: The Man Who Knows All About Snake Bites.....	488
Hound of Day.....	366	Seligman, Daniel: UE: The Biggest Communist Union.....	35
Bright Baton.....	406	Smith, Alton J.: What's Right with the Ministry.....	399
To a Student.....	741	Smith, Mortimer: Mayor Gaynor — A Political Maverick.....	469
Klapper, Paul: What's Wrong with College Teaching?.....	602	Solum, Sjanna: Lament.....	191
Lee, Henry: 1929: The Crash that Shook the World.....	539	Householders.....	618
Lowry, Robert: Be Nice to Mr. Campbell.....	328	Sondern, Frederic, Jr.: The Counterfeiting Business.....	90
McFee, William: The <i>Morro Castle</i> Tragedy.....	152	Stanford, Neal: Poland: Pattern of Soviet Duplicity.....	71
McNeil, Hector, Meets the Press.....	711	How the Communists Captured Czechoslovakia.....	341
Moorad, George: How Good Is Soviet Medicine?.....	578	Starbird, Kaye: The High Hill.....	684
Murray, John Courtney, S.J.: The Catholic Position — A Reply.....	274	Stewart, John Craig: What Did I Do?.....	450
Nathan, George Jean: Questions Without Answers.....	66	Taylor, Eugene J. & Rusk, Howard A.: Mentally Retarded Children.....	698
24 Impertinent Memoranda.....	425	Taylor, Senator Glen, Meets the Press.....	429
Nonsensical Beliefs.....	559	Thompson, Dorothy Brown: January Twentieth.....	482
Clinical Notes.....	706	Thorson, Inez Clark: Winter Field.....	295
O'Connor, Richard: Bob Ingersoll, the Devil's Ambassador.....	586	Walker, C. Lester: Our Growing Self-Sufficiency.....	742
Oliver, Frank: Attlee: Bloodless Revolutionist.....	133	Ward, May Williams: Pioneer.....	710
Sir Stafford Cripps.....	519	Wassersug, Joseph D.: Newer Pain Killers.....	55
Open Forum, The.....125, 249, 380, 508, 631, 759		Hardening of the Arteries.....	311
Poole, Mary: Nocturne.....	528	Waugh, Dorothy: And to Hold.....	547
Quinn, John Robert: Summer Sketch.....	70	Wharton, Don: Radioisotope: "Laboratory Spy".....	230
Redman, Ben Ray: From Dreiser to Farrell.....	113	Wolfe, Bertram D.: The Problem of Power.....	367
The Education of Henry Aldrich.....	236	Young Communist, A, Meets the Press... ..	194

**The most-discussed
book in America—
DON'T MISS IT!**



AMERICAN FREEDOM and CATHOLIC POWER

By PAUL BLANSHARD

**ALREADY IN ITS NINTH PRINTING:
85,000 COPIES**

Honored as one of the "50 outstanding religious books of the year" by the American Library Association.

**A Book-of-the-Month Club
Recommendation**

*"Mr. Blanshard has done a difficult and necessary piece of work with exemplary scholarship, good judgment and tact,"—
John Dewey, dean of American philosophers.*

At YOUR BOOKSELLER 350 pages \$3.50



The Beacon Press

BOSTON

*Who reads
The American Mercury?*
**THE MOST IMPORTANT MEN
AND WOMEN IN AMERICA!**

(Continued from page 763)

tions!) was none other than Mr. Colblentz's fine quarterly, *Wings*. I do not take issue with him on anything he has said; in fact, I am in hearty sympathy with him. But the poets have their woes, too. . . .

I could write a book on some of the experiences I have had with editors of the poetry magazines, and I am sure my colleagues in rhyme could do the same. This very week a poem of mine was accepted by a large national weekly. This poem had been accepted over two years ago by one of the better smaller poetry journals, which recently changed hands and decided not to use the poem. I am \$24 richer.

One editor of a poetry quarterly had consistently refused my verse for years. Finally, a poem of mine was read at one of the Poetry Society of America meetings, at which he was present. I received a letter right after that saying he had enjoyed my poem and would like it for his magazine. On checking my card-file, I discovered he had previously rejected that very poem. I sent it to him, without comment.

Another editor of a poetry quarterly returned a poem with a note asking if I was not "slipping." Soon after that the poem was bought and praised by one of the better quality literary magazines.

All in all, the poetry magazines, while not remunerative, are a fine thing, and the editors are often very helpful and generous with suggestions. And a poetry editor *does* read your poems, even if your husband or best friend won't.

MAE WINKLER GOODMAN

Cleveland, O.

THE LITERARY BAZAAR

FIRST EDITIONS • RARE BOOKS
AUTOGRAPHS • LITERARY SERVICES

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

THE OLDEST WRITERS' SERVICE. Literary Agent, established 25 years. Manuscripts criticised, revised, typed, marketed. Special attention to Book manuscripts. Poetry. Catalogue on request.

AGNES M. REEVE Dept. M, Franklin, Ohio

Anita Diamant, The Writers Workshop, Inc., Literary Agents. 29 years in the center of the publishing industry. We sell short stories, articles, books, radio scripts, plays. Verse also considered. Constructive criticism for new writers. Personal representation for established authors. Editing, revision. For information and references, 280 Madison Ave., at 40th St., N. Y. 16, N. Y.

OUT-OF-PRINT

WE SPECIALIZE and are successful in finding promptly the "Out-of-Print" or "Hard-to-Find" books which you particularly desire. Please write us stating "Wants." No obligation.

THE SEVEN BOOK-HUNTERS

Station O, Box 22 New York 11, N. Y.

GENERAL

ATHEIST BOOKS. 32-page catalogue free. Truth Seeker Co., 38 Park Row, New York 8, N. Y.

COIN COLLECTORS — Read "The Numismatist." Published monthly. News, illustrated feature articles on coins and medals. Sample copy 50¢. American Numismatic Association. P.O. Box 577, Wichita, Kansas.

Bound Volumes of THE AMERICAN MERCURY from January, 1924 to August, 1936 (large size, four issues to a volume) \$3.00 each (value \$4.50). Bound volumes from January, 1937 to December, 1943 (digest size, six issues to a volume) \$2.00 (value \$3.50). Most of these magazines are bound in buckram, and some have imported Batik papers added on the sides. Send order and remittance to Jean Jay, THE AMERICAN MERCURY, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York 22.

THE LITERARY BAZAAR places before you its large and active market. Announce your first editions, rarities, literary services, stamps, prints and coins in this section. A half-inch advertisement costs only \$9.00. Write Dept. LB-12, THE AMERICAN MERCURY, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.

IN NEW YORK
enjoy this exclusive

"On-the-Park" location

at these attractive rates
from \$5.50 single
from \$7.50 for 2 persons

Famed Continental Cuisine

Write for Booklet "M"



ST. MORITZ
ON-THE-PARK

New York's Only Truly

Continental Hotel

Charles G. Taylor, President

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946

of *The American Mercury*, published monthly at Concord, N. H., for October 1, 1949, State of New York, County of New York, ss. Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Joseph W. Ferman, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the General Manager of *The American Mercury* and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations), to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and general manager are: *Publisher and Editor*, Lawrence E. Spivak, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.; *Managing Editor*, Charles Angoff, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.; *General Manager*, Joseph W. Ferman, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y. 2. That the owners are: *The American Mercury, Inc.*, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.; *Lawrence E. Spivak*, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.; *Joseph W. Ferman*, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. J. W. Ferman, *General Manager*. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 22nd day of September, 1949. Ethel M. Shields, *Notary Public*. [Seal] (My commission expires March 30, 1950.)

Amazing

ALL THESE
5 BOOKS \$1

Delivered
Post-Paid!

BOOK BARGAIN!

This special offer is to acquaint new readers with The American Mercury's reprints of mystery books. Mail the coupon below with \$1, and all 5 of these exciting, swift-paced thrillers will be delivered promptly — to you, or as a gift to anyone you choose (our handsome gift card included without charge).

FEAR NO MORE* by Leslie Edgley

{Bestseller Mystery B104}

Sharon Carlin carried a sealed envelope which she had to get to a Jay Rogers. But she found a dead woman in her train compartment; then a squat, ugly man blackjacked her. She awoke to find herself charged with murder. Somehow she managed to reach Rogers, but he said: "I have never heard of you. I expected no envelope." She was alone, desperate — wanted for murder.

"Story moves with mounting suspense to thrilling climax." N. Y. TIMES

DEATH OF A TALL MAN* by Frances & Richard Lockridge

{Mercury Mystery M129}

When Dr. Gordon and his nurse had their heads bashed in, Pam and Jerry North went along with their friend, Homicide Lieutenant Bill Weigand, to the scene of the crime. Pam, of course, went off chasing screwy clues on her own, nearly got blown up, and discovered the strange killing of a tall man. Later, almost too late, Weigand realized that the important fact was not that the man was dead but that he was tall.

"Bang-up tale of murder and love... genuine thrill." N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE

COPS AND ROBBERS by O. Henry

{Bestseller Mystery B94}

Irony, tragedy, humor, all in swift, surprising strokes — those are the characteristics of O. Henry's classic short stories. Here are fifteen stories of crime, no two of them with the same approach. Five feature completely different brands of sleuths... nine explore as many distinct types of criminals. And, because murder is the ultimate crime, one extra murderer is included. A new collection you can't afford to miss.

"The breath of life is in it — realism touched with imagination." ELLERY QUEEN

NIGHTMARE TOWN by Dashiell Hammett

{Mercury Mystery M120}

All the world's readers are divided into two classes — those who would rather read Dashiell Hammett than eat... and those who place Dash second only to eating. Here are three novelettes and a short-story by a man whose memorable characterizations and driving pace are irresistible.

"Hammett achieves tremendous impact and virility." HOWARD HAYCRAFT

DEAR, DEAD WOMEN* by Dana Chambers

{originally The Case of Caroline Animus}

{Jonathan Press Mystery J34}

Jim Steele, of Military Intelligence, was on leave. With his svelte, bronze-haired wife, Lisa, he was relaxing in the Miami of lush night spots, ornate swimming pools... and murder! A madman who preyed on beautiful women was loose. But it was only when the killer went after Lisa that Jim leaped into action, to come up with a brilliant solution as shocking as the original crime had been!

"Blackmail and illegitimacy play sinister parts in lush yarn." SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*With the permission of the author or his publisher, this book has been cut to increase the speed of the story.

-----TEAR OUT AND MAIL-----	
THE AMERICAN MERCURY	AM12
570 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.	
□ Please send me, postage paid, the Mercury Mystery Package of 5 books, as advertised in the December issue of The American Mercury. I enclose \$1.	
□ Also send a package, with a gift card bearing my name, to each of the names and addresses herewith. I enclose \$.....	
Name.....	
Address.....	
City.....	Zone.....State.....

SPECIAL RATE *for American Mercury Readers—*

Ellery Queen, whose books, moving pictures and radio dramas have made him America's outstanding mystery author and editor, edits this magazine himself. Each month he brings you the best stories (both new and old) of leading detective-story writers, as well as the little-known crime classics by the literary great in other fields—a total of ten or more, often including a complete novelette! These are just a few of the noted authors whose stories have appeared recently:

DASHIELL HAMMETT
SOMERSET MAUGHAM
JAMES HILTON
ROY VICKERS
JAMES M. CAIN
AGATHA CHRISTIE
DOROTHY L. SAYERS
PHILIP WYLIE
CORNELL WOOLRICH

CHARLES DICKENS
BEN AMES WILLIAMS
J. B. PRIESTLEY
LOUIS BROMFIELD
ERNEST HEMINGWAY
WILLIAM FAULKNER
JOHN DICKSON CARR
STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT
ARNOLD BENNETT

Do you wonder *everyone* who enjoys good reading—mystery or not—finds pleasure in EQMM.

IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Among the many first-rate stories in the next two issues are:

Murder on New Year's Eve.....	Q. PATRICK
Extra! Extra!.....	ROBERT E. SHERWOOD
Death on Christmas Eve.....	STANLEY ELLIN
He Same to Us.....	MARGERY ALLINGHAM
A Woman in the Dark.....	DASHIELL HAMMETT
The Case of the Three Old Maids.....	MAC KINLAY KANTOR
The Viotti Stradivarius.....	LILLIAN DE LA TORRE
Conversation in Baker Street.....	HOWARD SPRING
The Patchwork Murder.....	ROY VICKERS

8
MONTHS



ONLY
\$ **2**

REGULAR PRICE — 35¢ PER COPY

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY, *critic and author*. "ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE has both the good wry bread of the run-of-the-guillotine crime tales and ALSO what a gift Queen has for rummaging out the honeys—those rare oddities that are vintage and not varicose. In short E.Q. has I.Q."



CARL VAN DOREN, *well-known editor, author and literary critic*. "I have never yet been disappointed by an issue of ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE and I have never read an issue that did not have at least one story that was worth the price of a year's subscription."



Among the many other notables who are regular readers and boosters of EQMM: Raymond Swing, Ilka Chase, Mark Van Doren, James Hilton, James Melton, Elsa Maxwell, Joseph Wood Krutch, James M. Cain and many others.

CLIP AND
MAIL THIS
CARD NOW

SEND
NO MONEY

NO POSTAGE
NEEDED

ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE

570 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

☐ Please send me the next 8 big, exciting issues of ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE at the special price of \$2 (regular price is 35¢ per copy).

Check one of the following if you wish to take advantage of these rates for a longer subscription: ☐ 1 Year, \$4 ☐ 2 Years, \$7 ☐ 3 Years, \$10

☐ Please send me bill. ☐ I enclose check.*

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____

*EXTRA ISSUE FREE. If you send payment now, thus saving us bookkeeping, we will extend your subscription for an extra month without charge. AM-12

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mystery Addict or Mystery Skeptic...

This Magazine

Is For



Stories by **DASHIELL HAMMETT**,
CORNELL WOOLRICH, and **GRAHAM GREENE**

If your first requirement in anything you read whether a magazine like *The American Mercury*, a book, or a newspaper—is that it must be *best of its kind*, ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE is edited for you. For this is the magazine that lifted the "low-brow-reading" stigma from mystery fiction, and demonstrated that the detective stories can hold their heads high in literary company. *** Today editors and novelists, analysts, statesmen and executives, educators, scientists, look forward eagerly each month to the relaxation, excitement and entertainment get from the wit-challenging pages of EQ. Join them, and see for yourself how much satisfaction you will get from it!

Continued on Inside Cover

8 MONTHS—OVER 80 STORIES—ONLY

REGULAR PRICE—35¢ PER COPY

BUSINESS REPLY CARD

No Postage Stamp Necessary if Mailed in the United States

4¢ POSTAGE WILL BE PAID, BY—

ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE

570 LEXINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

FIRST CLASS
PERMIT 1050
Sec. 510, P.L.&N.
NEW YORK, N. Y.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED